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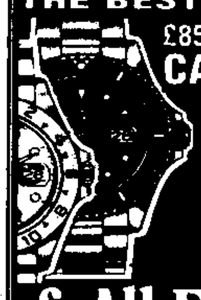

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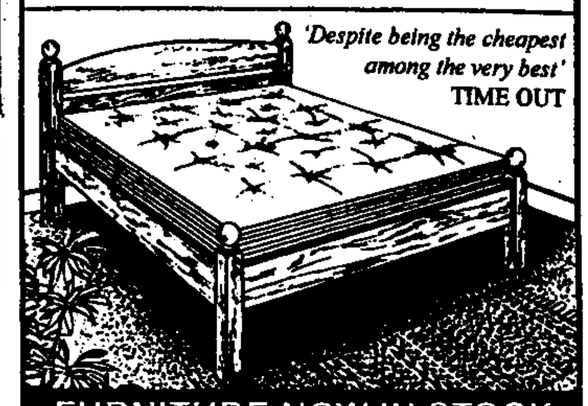

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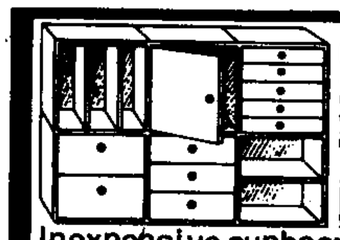

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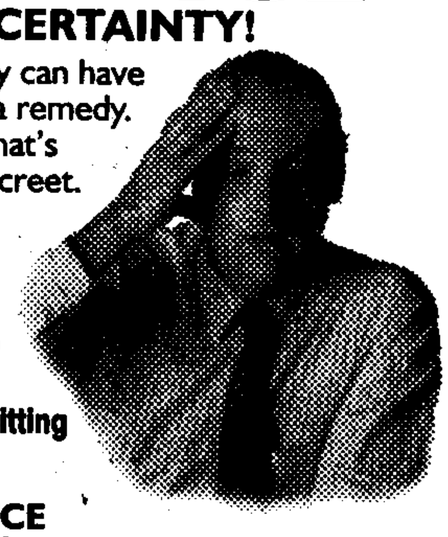

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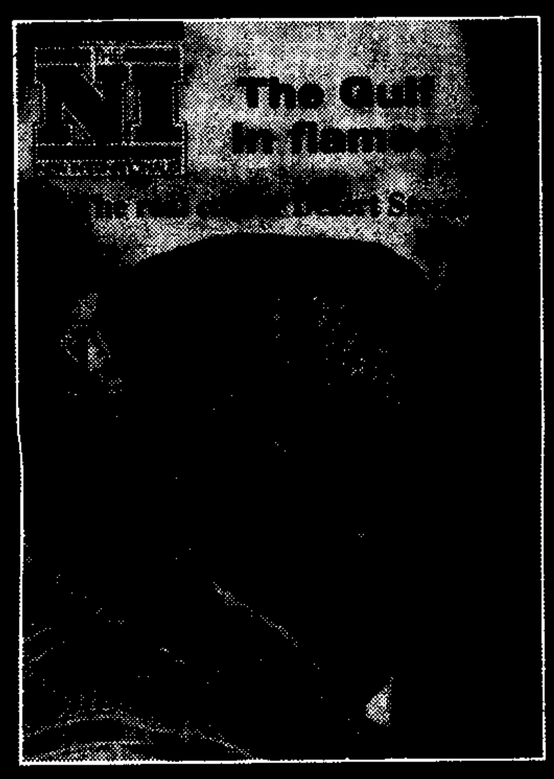

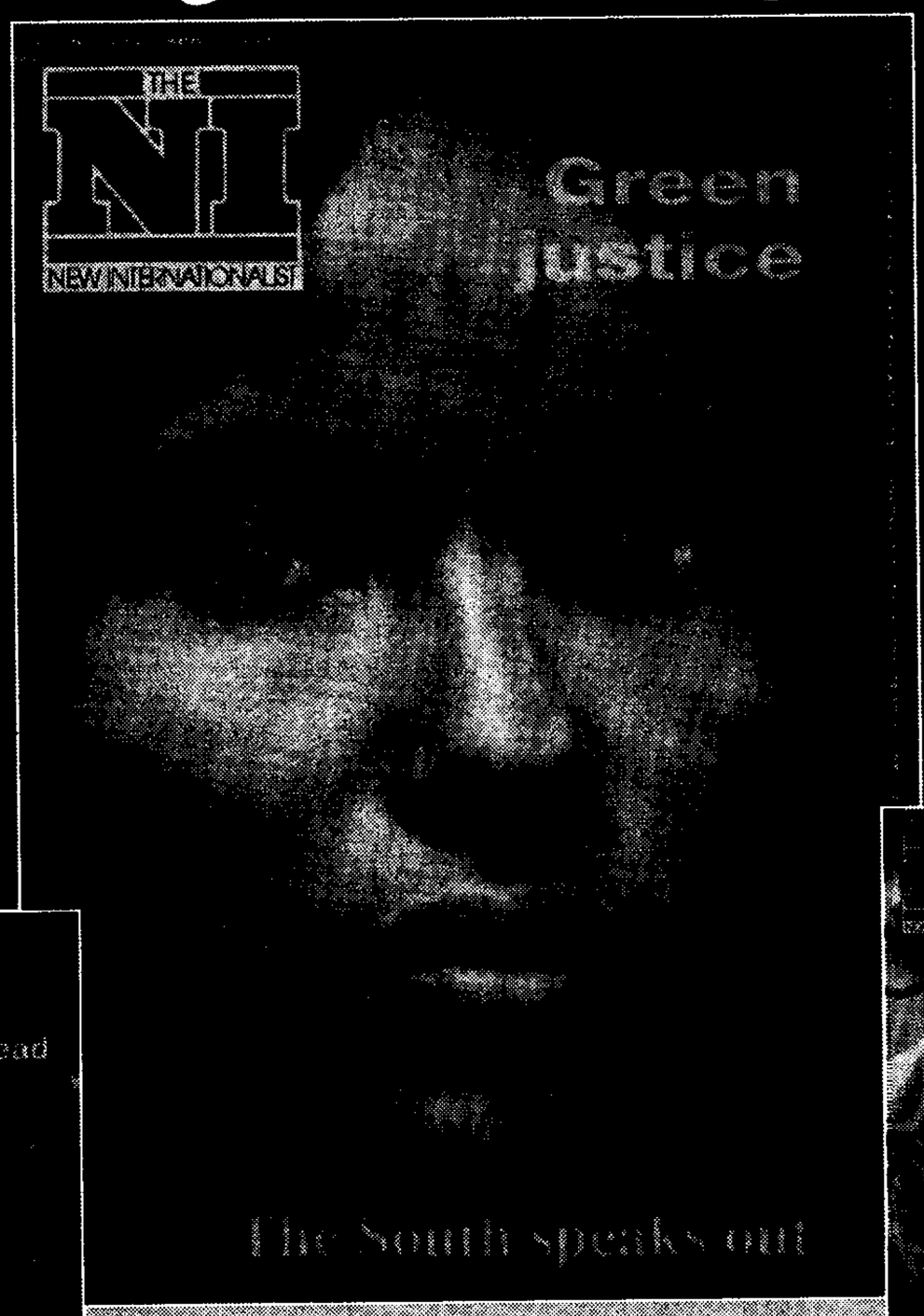

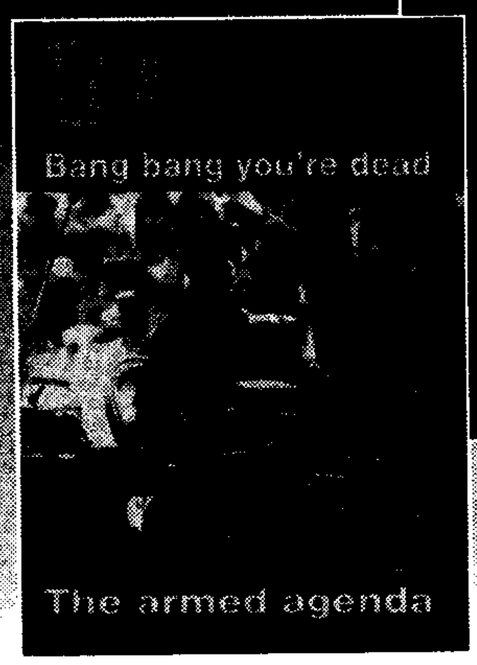

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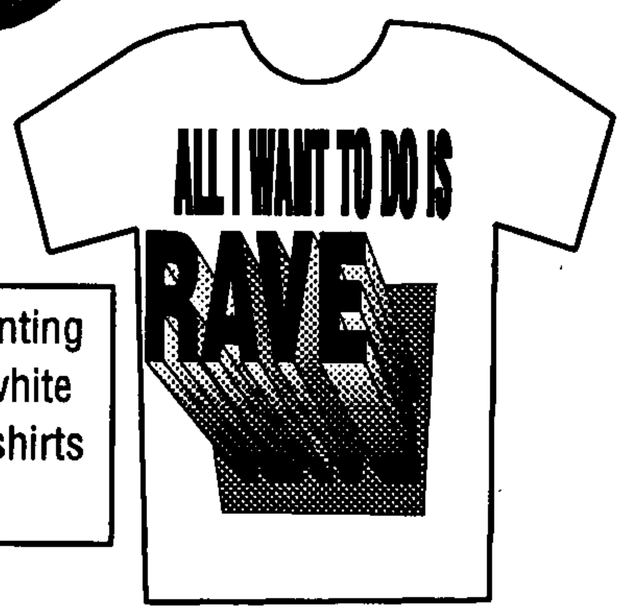

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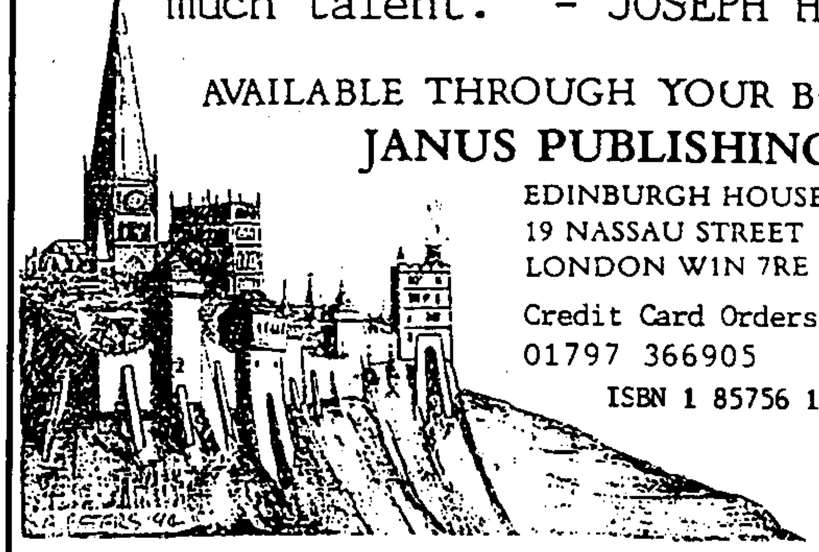

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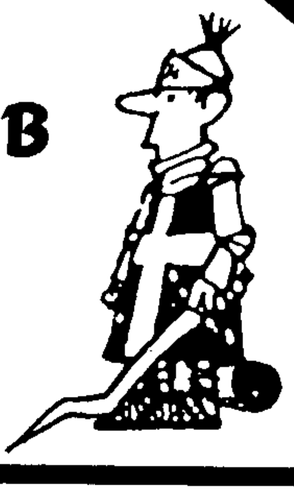

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Gnome

IT IS with huge pleasure that I can announce that GnomeSat, my non-terrestrial television station, has bought up the entire sport of Tiddlywinks.

From now on, viewers will only see this traditional British game on GnomeSport 1, and there will be no coverage on BBC or ITV.

This of course represents a huge gain to the tiddlywinks fans, who, for a subscription of only £5,000 per month, can now see their favourite sport exclusively on my network.

I have paid out a modest £700 billion for this privilege and would like to make it clear that I have done so out of a deep love for the game, rather than any desire to make money or embarrass my rivals.

That is why tiddlywinks — or "SuperPlink Live!", as it will be called from now on, will remain the same ancient and dignified sport that it has always been.

The fluorescent tiddlywinks will carry the name of the rival lager companies sponsoring the two teams, which will consist only of semi-naked women who remove a garment whenever they miss the pot.

The commentator will be Miss Cilla Black.

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PETER COOK

A memorial service for the life and work of Peter Cook will be held on Monday, 1 May. Unfortunately, because of lack of space, admission will be by invitation only. The majority of invitations have already been sent out, but there will be a limited number of places left for Private Eye readers. If you would like to attend, please send a request, marked MEMORIAL, to 6 Carlisle Street, W1V 5RG, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. All your letters will be acknowledged. To those who are disappointed, many apologies.

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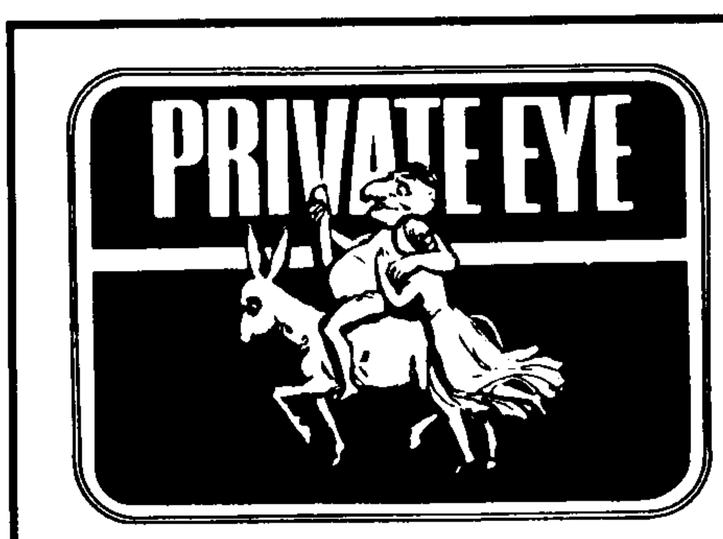


Aitken Special Page 7

COLOUR SECTION

CORONER John Burton was not at all happy when the jury in the inquest on the Marchioness disaster handed up its written verdict: unlawful killing.

Before he announced it, he asked jury members if they had understood his direction that they could not come to any verdict which appeared to contradict previous jury decisions in criminal trials: in this case the two hung juries when the captain of the dredger Bowbelle, Douglas Henderson, was charged with neglecting his duty under merchant shipping law. The inquest jury members said yes, they did understand the direction, so coroner Burton had to read the verdict out.

One reason the inquest jury may have taken a much sterner view of the Bowbelle's performance on that fatal night in 1989 was that the evidence at the inquest was very much more detailed than in the criminal cases. The prodigious alcohol intake of the Bowbelle crew, for instance, though it was plainly stated in the first statements to the police, never came out at the trials. At the inquest almost the entire crew admitted to drinking before the Bowbelle set off down river. The captain admitted to drinking six pints, the look-out to eight and the cook was taken on board completely legless. There was also a heap of new evidence about the location of the disaster suggesting that the conclusion of the Marine Accident Investigation Board was a load of codswallop, and the collision, as several witnesses testified, happened under Southwark bridge.

WELCOME aboard Sir Alistair Morton, joint chairman of Eurotunnel. The *Eye* has been telling him for three years that his company would not be able to pay the interest on its debts out of its takings, and now he agrees with us.

Morton has made the point that debts of £8 billion cost around £700 million a year in interest. We were more conservative, saying he would need only £600 million a year income to pay the interest. But the odd £100 million makes no difference because we now know that Eurotunnel's annual income is likely to be only £400 million. So as things stand the tunnel is destined to sink gracefully into growing debt — just like the Humber Bridge, never able to see off the debt collector.

But what happens now? Eurotunnel could go into liquidation, pay creditors a share of their losses and start afresh. This is the nightmare scenario of the ferry companies, which would be undercut by any new company freed of debt. They want Eurotunnel to survive. But Eurotunnel says it is floundering partly because the ferry companies have cut their prices.

So what could the ferry companies do to keep the tunnel in business? Suppose they were to push up prices and thus enable Eurotunnel to do the same. This would be a tacit price-fixing cartel, much disapproved of by the monopolies commission and Brussels, and it would mean the public would have to pay more to cross the Channel. But it would be to the benefit of the ferry companies and Eurotunnel. Surely such a thing could never happen?

THE libel courts are not half as cluttered as they used to be and the historic case of Michael Foot vs *Sunday Times* is wending its way to trial rather too speedily for the defendants' comfort.

In a desperate attempt to buy time, the *Sunset Times* tried to hold up its defence until the issue of Rupert Murdoch's name on the writ had been decided. Accordingly, the *ST*'s barrister Caroline Addey, flanked by the paper's in-house lawyer Alistair "Blubber" Brett, descended on Master Hodgson at the high court on 30 March asking for leave to delay.

The master was not impressed. He thought the judge who decided the Murdoch issue might like to see the *Sunday Times* defence before he did so, and he ordered the *Sunday Times* to get its defence in by 28 April.

The question of whether Rupert Murdoch should be liable for a libel which appears in one of his newspapers will be debated at length (unhappily in private) on 18 May. Some say that the affidavits testifying to Murdoch's proclivity to "intervene" in his papers' editorial policy will take a few days to read.

One extract certain to be quoted is a famous one from *Selling Hitler* by Robert Harris, the full story of the *ST*'s greatest scoop, the Hitler Diaries. Harris tells of the consternation at the *Sunday Times* when, on the eve of the diaries' publication, Lord Dacre the historian who previously argued that the diaries were genuine did what he called "a 180 degree turn" and suddenly decided they were fake.

Should the presses be stopped and the story spiked? Depressed journalists and the editor thought they should. Brian MacArthur, a senior editor, managed to get proprietor Murdoch on the line. Murdoch's advice was decisive. "Fuck Dacre," he barked. "Publish". The *Sunday Times* published... and the diaries were fake.

KEEN *Eye* readers may recall the news item 11 years ago (*Eye* 576, January 1984) about alleged Ugandan activities involving a senior executive in BBC Radio.

The item referred to a complaint by a "secretary" about "unsolicited Ugandan discussions with Michael 'Biffo' Farman", then a deputy home news editor at the BBC. The complaint arose from an alleged attempt by Farman to enter the secretary's hotel room during an out-of-town conference. Though he was soon promoted, Farman was reprimanded about the incident, which he denied, and banned from future out-of-town conferences.

Now all these years later it may be relevant to reveal the name of the complaining secretary: one Odette Nightingale, the *News of the World*'s informer about the recent controversial "three-in-a-bed" encounters with Richard Spring MP, ersthwhile parliamentary private secretary.

No doubt Ms Nightingale's expertise with a tape recorder during that encounter was picked up during her time at the BBC.

"Extra! Extra! Mind your own business!"

Street of Shame

IF A privacy law is introduced, it will be largely thanks to the antics of gormless Piers Morgan, editor of the *News of the Screws*. Even Woodrow Wyatt, the paper's "Voice of Reason", felt the exposure of Richard Spring MP was a scoop too far.

"The *News of the World* has as good as asked for a privacy law," he wrote in *The Times* last week. "The government and opposition should no longer hesitate to produce it."

Woodrow Wyatt is a close and influential friend of Rupert Murdoch. But Murdoch also makes millions out of the *News of the Screws*'s weekly invasions of privacy. So which way will the Digger jump?

Murdoch has a long record of adjusting his behaviour to ingratiate himself with governments in the countries where he operates — from Communist China to the capitalist US of A. Besides, his wife is known to be embarrassed by the sleazy reputation of some of his titles. So he could placate British politicians (and Woodrow Wyatt and Anna Murdoch) by sacking Piers Morgan and promising that the *Screws* will clean up its act. If so, however, the paper's circulation might well plummet — depriving the Digger of much-needed cash.

Meanwhile since Piers Morgan has set himself up as chief invigilator of the nation's bedrooms, one of his rival papers should send a few undercover reporters — armed with tape recorders and secret cameras — to unearth the truth about his own love life. According to sources at Wapping, there are some interesting discoveries to be made. The public interest demands that we should be told.

NEVER let it be said that David Mellor has no principles. On certain subjects — such as his loathing of Rupert Murdoch and the tabloid press — he has been staunch and consistent.

Last March, when the *News of the Screws* exposed Sir Peter Harding's affair with Bienvenida Buck, he was quick to condemn the paper's "debased standards". In July he once again denounced the *Screws* for interviewing Leigh Gilbert, the boyfriend of Abbie Humprhies's kidnapper. "The purchase and publication of this crap is just the latest incident in a summer full of sleazy decisions by the tabloids," he raged.

"As the tabloids proceed on their rake's progress from the gutter to the sewer, someone somewhere really should give a damn." A month later, at the Edinburgh Festival, he made a speech vigorously attacking Murdoch. Finally, in November, he himself became a victim of the *News of the Screws* when it revealed his passion for milady Cobham. "This is bullying, perhaps sadism," he complained angrily, "and sooner or later it will surely have to stop."

But of course it didn't stop, as Richard Spring MP learned to his cost only two weeks ago. What did Mellor do? Burn the *Screws* in public? Lead a picket of the paper's offices? Er, no. Instead our flexible friend took the Wapping shilling: Mellor wrote his first column for the *News of the Screws* last Sunday. He was billed, amusingly enough, as the man who "gives it to you straight".

IT SEEMS a long time ago since anyone felt moved to praise the crime coverage of the *Daily Mirror* — not least because the paper's own crime hacks so signally failed to spot their former proprietor's own crookery.

Last Saturday, however, the paper carried a glowing tribute from Nichola McAuliffe, star of ITV's *Surgical Spirit*. Under the heading "Why The *Daily Mirror* Makes Me Feel Good", she gushed: "The *Mirror*'s crime reporting and news is [sic] accurate, fast and in-depth."

Ms McAuliffe's enthusiasm is presumably unconnected with the fact that she currently lives with Don Mackay, the *Daily Mirror*'s crime reporter.

ON THE morning of Friday 7 April, David Sullivan's *Daily Sport* carried a graphic account of how "killer Nick Ingram fried to death at midnight in an American jail's electric chair".

Sport hack John Burke-Davies — who covered the execution from the vantage point of his desk at the *Sport's* office in Manchester — reported that Ingram had "grimaced" as he was wired up to the mains. "Crowds outside Jackson prison, near Atlanta, Georgia, cheered as the switch was pulled at 7pm local time," he added. Ingram "was pronounced dead by doctors more than 20 minutes later".

Even from the paper which brought us a World War II bomber on the moon, this was fantasy journalism of a high order. For although Ingram had been due to die on the Thursday night, his lawyers had won a 24-hour stay of execution. By the time the *Sport* hit the streets, Ingram was, in fact, alive and still on Death Row.

How did it happen? The *Sport* went to press at the ludicrously early hour of 7pm — before the scheduled time for the execution, and before the reprieve was granted. But editor Jeff McGowan — or "Johnny November", as he was known in his previous career as a pop singer — was determined his paper shouldn't miss the ghoulish fun. He therefore ordered the luckless Burke-Davies to write an account of what usually happens to victims of the electric chair and "sprinkle some star dust" on it.

POLLY Toynbee, the BBC's pampered "social affairs editor", has been at the centre of a cliffhanger: would she or wouldn't she abandon her short telly career and defect to the *Independent*?

John Birt, a close friend, had offered her £64,000 a year, chauffeur-driven transport and a week-long crash course in how to be a TV reporter to entice her to join his elite band of privileged super-specialists. But la Toynbee never quite got the hang of performing to camera. A few weeks ago she accepted a job offer from another of her chums, *Indie* editor Ian Hargreaves. She handed in her resignation at the BBC and organised a farewell party at her sumptuous Clapham home.

But then there was a hiccup. Hargreaves found that his boss, David Montgomery, was trying to replace him with Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill. For a while it seemed he might not be at the *Indie* by the time Toynbee made her return to the Street of Shame. Tony "Head Prefect" Hall, managing director of BBC news and current affairs, hastened to reassure her: "You can change your mind about resignation if you like," he told her. The farewell party was postponed and the social affairs unit waited breathlessly for the outcome.

Hargreaves eventually won a stay of execution at the *Indie* — and Toynbee duly confirmed her resignation. Her farewell party remains postponed *sine die*, but BBC colleagues are organising a celebration of their own.

AFTER a lively career at the *Sun* and *Daily Express* (see *Eyes passim*), Mike Parry has become chief press officer for the Football Association.

In this capacity he was indignantly outspoken after the recent death of a Crystal Palace fan before the FA cup semi-final. "My immediate reaction is one of total horror," he told reporters. "We are immediately investigating the circumstances which led to this terrible incident."

Parry is well qualified to pronounce on hooliganism. Twenty years ago, as a boisterous 19-year-old fresh out of Kings School Chester, he was charged with damaging a car by jumping up and down on it after a pub crawl. Parry told the court he was "drowsy" when he left the last pub and "knew nothing of people jumping on cars".

Judge Robin David was unimpressed. Issuing a stern rebuke about "loutish and drunken behaviour" he fined Parry £50.

THE *Guardian*'s Ian Mayes loudly defended his paper and its regional arts policy when the *Eye* questioned its dedication to regional theatre.

But his attempts to gloss over the dumping of regional theatre critics have obviously failed. He has now discreetly left his post as arts editor, to be replaced by Clare Armistead. The defender of the regions is now resting in peace on the obits page.

"How sick can you get? Some bastard's been selling these kids stupid trousers"

HACKS on the City desk of the *Times* were sorry to learn recently of the impending departure of Susan Gilchrist, the paper's retail specialist, who has been hired by PR firm Brunswick for a reputed £70,000 a year.

While serving out her notice, Gilchrist continues to work for the ex-Thunderer. Last Tuesday, for instance, she wrote about Signet, the former Ratner's jewellery chain, which is fighting an EGM called by the disaffected shareholders. The story, headed SIGNET SAYS REBEL BREAK-UP PLAN MAKES NO SENSE, gave a glowing account of Signet chairman James McAdam's defence of Signet from the rebels.

No doubt her new employers at Brunswick were duly impressed. For, as luck would have it, Signet is one of Brunswick's clients.

THE *Mail on Sunday* recently carried a vigorous attack on breast-feeding ("Tiny victims of breast-is-best zealots"), which told the heart-tugging story of one Celia Atkin, who was unable to produce enough mother's milk and was therefore endangering the health of her baby son, Ross.

"Fortunately," the paper reported, "Celia's husband, Edward, intervened on the tenth day and put Ross on supplementary bottle feeds."

This rang a bell with hacks at the magazine *Living Earth*. As they reveal in their new issue, Edward Atkin is the owner of a company called Avent — which, by a remarkable coincidence, is the UK's leading manufacturer of baby-bottles.

THE makers of Findus frozen foods are feeling decidedly frosty towards the *Sunday Times*.

Having been persuaded to buy an ad in the paper's pisspoor "Style" section on 9 April, Findus executives found to their horror it appeared on the same page as a long article about the painfully thin Countess Spencer and other sufferers from "eating disorders".

And which product was Findus advertising? "Lean Cuisine".

TUC NEWS

MERSEYSIDE's Trade Union and Resource Centre is meant to help the jobless — but its brothers and sisters seem more concerned with making one of their own jobless.

Alec McFadden was suspended as development officer and given five minutes to clear his desk after he complained about a tirade of abuse from his boss, the delightful "coordinator" Kevin Coyne.

Charges were eventually brought, including the accusation that he McFadden had attended TUC meetings without permission. (This was dropped when it was revealed that Coyne had been chauffered to the same meetings by McFadden.) He was also charged with "using an ex-NALGO telephone" left in his office by mistake. Other charges included courting excessive publicity and a spurious suggestion about missing money. Most were quietly withdrawn.

Nonetheless the tribunal convened by Coyne sacked McFadden on the grounds that Coyne could not work with him, that his competency and professionalism were doubted, and that he had a role in the wider union movement. His case has just been to appeal... where McFadden was horrified to see Greg Coyne, Kevin's brother, on the panel.

The Eye Says: Sword Off, Aitken!

JONATHAN AITKEN has vowed to wield "the simple sword of truth" in his crusade against "bent and twisted journalism". But does the great arms-dealer even own such a weapon, let alone know how to wield it?

A study of his record suggests not. Like his great hero Richard Nixon (of whom he once wrote a hagiography), Aitken seems to believe that the truth is so precious it must be strictly rationed.

Consider, for instance, his spell as a director of TV-am in the 1980s. Aitken joined the board in 1981, thanks to a 14.9 per cent stake in the breakfast channel which had been acquired by his firm, Beaverbrook Investments. But Beaverbrook Investments was in turn controlled by the Saudi Arabian royal family through a firm called Al Bilad, of which Aitken was also a director. Under IBA regulations, Aitken was obliged to inform the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) of any shareholding exceeding 1 per cent which was held by non-EEC organisations or individuals. Did he wave his simple sword of truth and tell the IBA?

Er, no. Nor did he mention to his fellow-directors of TV-am that the station was being bankrolled with Saudi money. It was only in 1988 — when the *Observer* revealed his little secret — that Aitken came clean. "With the wisdom of seven years' hindsight," he said, "I accept that the confidential requirements of our clients were given too high a priority above the candour that should have been offered to our colleagues on the board of TV-am."

But then candour often seems to take a low place on Aitken's list of priorities, as we pointed out last year ("Fiction Masterclass: Learn the Aitken Way", *Eye* 859). In April 1977, he angrily denied

JUST FANCY THAT

IN 1970 Jonathan Aitken was prosecuted under the official secrets act for publishing a secret report which revealed that Britain was supplying 80 per cent of Nigeria's weaponry during the Biafran war. This report, amazingly, was called 'The Scott Report'.

In his defence he said that he felt "passionate indignation" at this evidence that parliament had not been informed of the arms sales.

In April 1992 Jonathan Aitken finally became a minister himself, in charge of "defence procurement" (aka arms sales). How did this champion of open government put his ideals into practice? The following month, when asked about Britain's role in supplying weapons for the Iran-Iraq war, he had his chance. "It has been the consistent policy of successive governments," he said, "not to discuss particulars of defence sales with other countries as these are matters of commercial confidentiality..."

reports of a "romance" with Carol Thatcher. "The story is completely untrue," he said. "My constituents must be getting as exhausted as I am by the London gossip columnists' capacity for fiction on romantic issues." Two years later, he revealed to the *News of the World* that he had indeed had an affair with the Iron Lady's daughter. "I certainly felt a lot for her," he recalled. "We were very much romantically attached."

A TRIFLING example. But Aitken's habit of being economical with the *actualité* (to use a phrase coined by his close friend Alan Clark) is also applied to more serious matters.

Take the interminable saga of his stay at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in September 1993. A month after the event, an informant told the *Guardian* that other guests at the Ritz that week included three of his former business partners — Wafic Said, Said Mohammed Ayas and Dr Fahad Somait. The newspaper asked the MP about this remarkable coincidence. "I had no meeting with Mr Ayas, Dr Somait and Mr Wafic Said in Paris over the weekend of 18 September or at any other place or time," he replied. The purpose of his visit had been to spend some time with his wife and daughter (though, oddly enough, they were not staying in the hotel with him). "I had no meetings in Paris or Geneva except for social encounters with my

daughter's godparents and other old friends."

Unambiguous enough, you might think: the *Guardian* had been felled by one mighty blow from Mr Valiant-For-Truth.

Not quite. For the "godparent" in question, as the newspaper soon discovered, was Said Mohammed Ayas. When this was put to Aitken, he at last conceded: "Yes, I did see Mr Ayas."

The next question to interest the *Guardian* was Aitken's hotel bill, of which it had obtained a copy. At the foot of the bill were the words: "Debiteur: A/C Mr Ayas." "Mr Ayas did not pay my hotel bill," Aitken told the paper on 14 January last year. "The facts of the matter are that the hotel bill was paid by my wife, with money given to her by me for this purpose, some hours after I had left Paris."

Did Aitken not possess a credit card? Why couldn't he have paid the bill himself, instead of obliging his wife to make a special trip to the hotel armed with a bagful of cash? He did not explain. Still, his denial seemed to be unequivocal.

Or was it? By then, thanks to the *Guardian*'s inquiries, Aitken was being investigated by the cabinet secretary, Sir Robin Butler. On 26 January, to support his case, Aitken told Sir Robin that Ayas had now received a letter from the Ritz confirming that Mrs Aitken had paid the bill.

Not so: the Ritz's letter consisted of just one sentence, telling Ayas that "you have not personally paid the bill of Jonathan Aitken". It said nothing about Mrs Aitken.

On 17 February Aitken asked the Ritz's manager, Frank Klein, if he could remember Lolicia Aitken's transaction. Klein said that the cashier recalled "a brunette lady of European aspect paid the cash sum of Ff4257 in favour of the account of Mr Ayas." Even though Lolicia is manifestly not a brunette, Aitken sent a copy of this letter to Sir Robin Butler on 3 March as further proof.

Well, not the whole letter: before sending it to the cabinet secretary Aitken erased the words "in favour of the account of Mr Ayas" — thereby altering its meaning entirely.

Last October, the *Guardian* obtained the full text of Klein's letter and drew attention to Aitken's creative editing. Rather late in the day, he provided yet another "explanation": part of the bill had been paid by Ayas's nephew, by some mysterious oversight. Aitken had reimbursed him with a cheque dated 21 February 1994 — more than a month after his denial that anyone other than his wife might have paid the bill. By yet another mysterious oversight, Aitken had neglected to mention this cheque in his letter of 3 March.

THIS PATTERN — outright denial, followed by amendments and ambiguities — has been repeated several times since. Last November, for example, it was alleged that Aitken had visited Ayas's yacht, the Katamarino, in the summer. At 5.15pm on 5 November, Aitken's office denied the story on his behalf: "At no stage was he on the Katamarino." An hour later, told that the ship's captain distinctly remembered seeing him, the office subtly altered its statement: "Mr Aitken has never been on a 10-day cruise on the Katamarino or any other boat. He has never been on any boat in his life for longer than a few hours, or a day trip or a short sea crossing."

The captain stuck to his story. And, the next day, the treasury changed its statement yet again: "This is a purely private matter. But I believe Mr Aitken and his family had dinner on board with an old family friend one evening." The friend was, of course, Said Mohammed Ayas.

JUST FANCY THAT

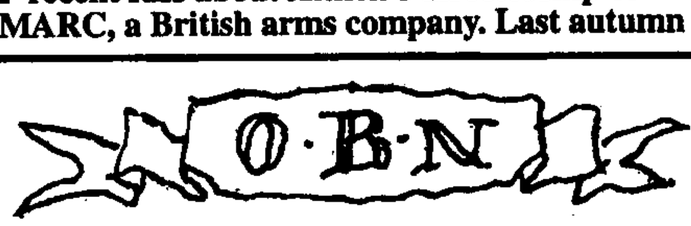
THE Alan Clark diaries give several examples of how Aitken uses "the trusty shield of British fair play".

In March 1984, for instance, Clark had a "brilliant idea" to sabotage the appointment of his enemy, Lord Young, to Mrs Thatcher's private office: he contacted "my old friend and standby for many a dirty trick, Jonathan Aitken" and asked him to leak the story, with plenty of anti-Young spin, to the *Financial Times*.

"He was very understanding," Clark records, "got the point at once, and promised that he would attend to it immediately." Sure enough, the *FT* ran the story the following day.

In April 1990, Clark once again wished to blackguard a colleague, this time Michael Mates MP. So he decided to leak embarrassing information about Mates to a Labour MP, Tam Dalyell. Once again, Aitken did the dirty work. "Jonathan undertook to contact Tam and prime him with a question about Singer Link Miles (who pay Mates)..."

Leaks, black propaganda, character assassination, consorting with the enemy — what could be fairer than that?



Family favourites: Thank heavens there is at least one normal, attractive family in British politics. I am referring to that of Jonathan Aitken, the minister who turned the sleaze-attacks of the left-wing media into a victory. I particularly liked his daughter Victoria, laughing in the face of a barrage of cameras — as if she was on a school trip to the zoo. Contrast Aitken pere, mere et fille with the ghouls of The Guardian and the beards of World in Action. The Ancient Spartans had it right. They threw Guardian types over the cliffs of Mount Taigetos at birth. Of course Aitken types were safe.

TAKI
Sunday Times

Submitted by Everyone.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

he was asked by a television researcher what he knew about Project Lisi, BMARC's contract for exporting guns to Singapore. On 28 November he issued his customary flat denial: "I had no knowledge of Project Lisi."

On 29 March this year the *Independent* ran the story of Project Lisi. Aitken's response was slightly vaguer than before: "I have no recollection of Project Lisi" — leaving open the possibility that he might have known about it but subsequently forgotten.

The ex-chairman of BMARC's parent company, Gerald James, insisted that Aitken must have known. On 30 March, Aitken rephrased his denial once more. "At no board meeting of the company and in no board paper of the company was I ever given the slightest indication or information that could suggest that the company's wholly legitimate contract to Singapore might subsequently result in components being shipped to Iran." As we pointed out in the last *Eye*, this was quite a U-turn: there was now no denial of knowledge of Project Lisi — merely a denial that he knew the guns might go to Iran.

If Aitken's libel suit against the *Guardian* ever comes to court, he will be obliged to swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It should be a novel experience for him.

THE Tories face annihilation in Wales in the May elections — but do they care? By next year they will effectively govern Wales by direct rule: after local government reorganisation, Tory appointees on Welsh quangos will outnumber democratically elected councillors.

Typical of those on the quango gravy train is busy businessman Derek Morgan. He is a director of three companies and a management consultancy, as well as being on the BT Advisory Forum... Swansea University Council... the Welsh Higher Education Standing Working Group... and being involved in the Mid-Glamorgan TEC... Taff-Ely Enterprise Partnership... and the Business in the Community Board for Wales.

But this is not enough, and Derek was recently appointed chairman of the new NHS trust at the University Hospital in Cardiff, where — in addition to his directorships — he can rake in an extra £19,285 a year for a three-and-a-half-day week. It makes one wonder how he finds time for sleep — or for hobbies like also being president of the Bridgend Conservative Association.

Of course being a Tory had nothing to do with him getting the NHS job, and Morgan even said he'd resign if he thought he had been appointed on a political basis. Indeed, keeping politics out of it he did not declare his political views on his application form and nor were politics discussed at the interview. So that's all right then.

While it is true that John Redwood, the Welsh secretary, spends as little time as possible in Wales, Redwood's excuse that he knows nothing about Derek Morgan makes him almost unique in the cabinet. Mr Morgan has had ministers such as Michael Heseltine and William Waldegrave as guests at his home — not forgetting David Hunt, Redwood's predecessor, who also stayed with Morgan earlier this year. Just before the NHS trust interviews in fact.

COINCIDENCE CORNER: Ex-Tory MP Ian Grist chairs South Glamorgan Health Authority, earning £19,285 a year for a three and a half day week; and the prominent Tory figure of Sir Donald Walters earns £17,145 a year (for 3.25 days a week) as chairman of Llandough (*sic*) NHS trust in Cardiff. Janet Sainsbury, wife of a leading Tory, chairs South Glamorgan Family Health Services Authority for £11,720 a year for a two and a half day week. And David Crosby, another Tory activist, was appointed chairman of the Cardiff Community Healthcare Trust (17,145 a year for 3.25 days a week) at the same time Derek Morgan got his new job. Six out of the seven health quangos in South Glamorgan are now run by Tories.

READERS of the *Daily Mail* must have admired the glamorous pictures of the new home of David Mellor, the MP for Putney.

Though it has a lovely view of the Thames, Mellor's mansion is several miles down river from Putney and is probably the most expensive single residence in all yuppie docklands. How Mellor can afford such astonishing luxury when he is divorcing his wife may surprise those who have not studied the MPs' register of interests.

Mellor pretends that he makes a lot of money from the media — radio shows and the like — but the register tells the real story. "Fees from journalism and radio" are a drop in the ocean compared with the bulk of his consultancies, which show that he is paid by some of the top names in British industry.

Strangely Mellor is rather shy about the main product of these companies. He describes RACAL Tacticom, for instance, as a "UK Manufacturing Company", which is strictly true. Racal is one of the country's biggest manufacturers of arms and "defence-related equipment".

So is Vosper Thorneycroft, modestly described by their consultant Mellor as "shipbuilders" — the ships are mainly warships for export, usually to dictators.

So is British Aerospace PLC, which since it swallowed privatised Royal Ordnance is the biggest British merchant of death. BAe pays Mellor, but Mellor somehow doesn't mention its role in the world of arms.

Another paymaster is Short Brothers of Belfast, which Mellor quaintly calls "a high technology manufacturing company" — presumably because it manufactures some of the highest technology and deadliest weaponry exported from Britain. For instance, Shorts made the Blowpipe missile which was in such high demand by both sides in the Iran-Iraq war, and by the Contras in their battle against the elected government of Nicaragua.

Mellor has plainly discovered what is known at Westminster as "the Aitken Road" to fame and fortune: if you want to make real money fast as a parliamentary consultant, you must make friends with Arab rulers (cf Mellor's grovelling with his mistress at the feet of the emir of Bahrain in the last *Eye*) and "consult" with the merchants of death.

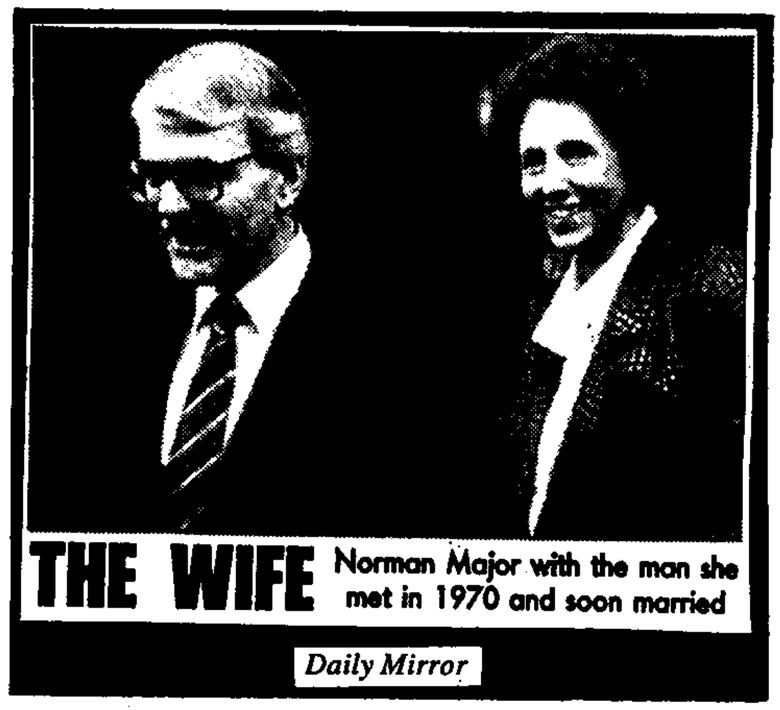
PS: Another important consultant to Short Brothers in recent years was Steve Tipping, ubiquitous business partner of Mark Thatcher.

JONATHAN AITKEN's stalwart defenders in the Conservative party have been calling for privacy laws to be slapped on the sleazy media.

First, there is the Rt Hon Archie Hamilton, a ministry of defence pal of Aitken's who fails to see anything wrong with his colleague's actions. He has been all over the television and radio calling for a press clampdown.

Hamilton would certainly enjoy the benefits of any privacy bill. A bill, for example, might have checked the revelation (*Eyes passim*) about his own armaments history. He closed down an armaments depot in Trecwn, Pembrokeshire, when minister of defence with the loss of 500 jobs and about £10 million from the local economy. The favourite for buying the old depot was a company called Crown Ridge, which was keen to make such a potentially profitable acquisition. Archie Hamilton is a prominent director of Crown Ridge.

Alan Duncan, the MP for Rutland, is another staunch Aitken supporter who has called for a privacy bill. His own private life is less than spotless. He resigned as PPS in January after it was



revealed — by a newspaper — that he had bought a council house in Westminster through a friend at a large discount.

OBSERVERS of the North Sea oil scene are wondering why energy minister Tim Eggar has failed to honour a pledge to circulate "before Easter" a consultation paper on guidelines relating to the biggest act of marine vandalism in history.

It concerns up to 200 giant oil platforms in the North Sea, which are being abandoned to save the taxpayer the cost of clearing them away. Eggar, addressing the world's richest oil companies at the Institute of Petroleum in February, put it delicately: "We must take account of the concerns of the environment and other users of the sea... But cost must be weighed in the balance. Much of the cost will be offset against tax and up to 60 percent of the burden will fall on the taxpayer."

Taxpayers might ask why the oil companies (who have made rather a lot of money from the oil and gas) should not clear away their own mess. Well, they were freed from this expensive task in 1987 by the then financial secretary to the treasury, one John Major, who introduced tax relief to spare the companies (and British Gas) most of the cost.

If Eggar's consultation paper *had* appeared "before Easter" it would have been before parliament's last day in session — the day before the Scottish elections. The paper might have made an unfavourable impression, particularly at the Scottish Fishermen's Federation which is fighting to save the sea. The department of trade says the timetable "slipped a bit because things can get quite complicated coordinating so many government departments". It should now appear just after Easter, apparently.

MORE news on the government's commitment to safety standards.

Transec, a department of transport division devoted to security, was formed six years ago after the Lockerbie disaster raised fears over aviation safety. Its specialist role has now spread to cover shipping and the safety of the Channel tunnel — the latter's potential vulnerability to terrorist attack being high in the public's mind.

To improve Transec's service and allay public fears the government has taken action: it is cutting the number of security specialists at Transec by 28 percent. The redundancies will achieve annual savings of only £1 million, a figure confirmed in evidence passed to union officials. The job losses are part of a DoT plan to cut Transec's costs by 30 percent.

Meanwhile at the health and safety executive (HSE) the inspectors responsible for checking on-site safety are being moved out of hazardous areas like agriculture and construction into safer fields like education.

Normally 175 inspectors are attached to agricultural inspection, but 80 of these are now performing other duties. By keeping the inspector's original job titles ministers can still claim that proper levels of safety are being maintained. The job swaps may delight the Tories' friends in the building trade, but even the reactionary National Farmers' Union has attacked the move.

HSE inspectors numbers are also falling as they opt for early retirement. Last month nearly every senior inspector left the executive's south London office — taking more than 250 years' experience with them.

'Backbiter'

JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP
CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE TROUPE
I'VE GOT THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THE MAY 4TH ELECTION FAILURE!

NOOKS and CORNERS

IT IS not too late, I hope, to wallow in that most pleasurable of base emotions, *Schadenfreude*, as the collapse of Barings can only be sweet to anyone who cares about architecture.

It is, of course, axiomatic that any organisation that replaces its old headquarters with a whizzy new building is doomed — look what Richard Rogers has done for Lloyd's of London.

Baring Bros once had a handsome building in Bishopsgate designed by Norman Shaw with interiors by Lutyens. It has gone — replaced by a banal new building — but as Barings acquiesced in its destruction in 1974 to make way for a fatuous road-widening imposed by the City Corporation, perhaps it cannot be censured quite as much as Lloyd's. Much worse is what happened to houses owned by members of the family.

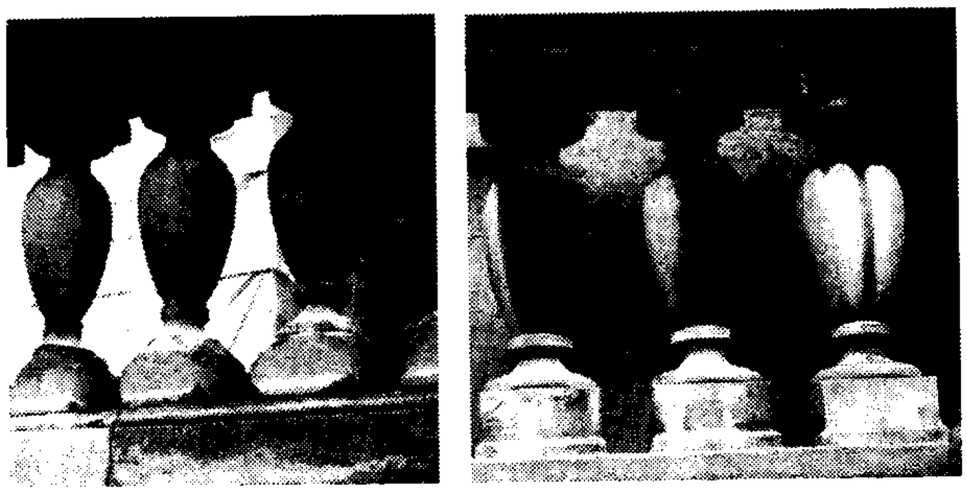
There was the Grange, of course, down in Hampshire, the famous Greek revival house with a Doric portico designed by William Wilkins, architect of the National Gallery. In the 1970s, this was owned by the Hon John Baring (now Sir John), chairman of Baring Bros, who seems not to have cared for his ancestral home which happened to be one of the supreme monuments of European Neo-Classicism.

Not, of course, that he was prepared to let anyone else enjoy it. The house was abandoned and progressively wrecked, the dining room by C.R. Cockerell destroyed. In 1972 "Blow Up" Baring had actually placed dynamite in the basement of the Grange to achieve a final solution to his conservation problem, when he was stopped by a telegram sent by the secretary-general to the Council of Europe to the prime minister at the time of the big Neo-Classicism exhibition at the Royal Academy. Adverse publicity prevented Baring from pressing the plunger and, eventually, after more neglect, the house was acquired by the department of the environment.

Not that this was the first architectural victim of the public-spirited chairman of Baring Bros. In the early 1960s he demolished nearby Stratton Park, a house by George Dance junior, Soane's distinguished master, leaving only the Tuscan portico to act as a foil to a wretched Miesian new house in steel, brick and glass designed by Stephen Gardiner and Christopher Knight — thus demonstrating that he not only had a hatred of old architecture but poor taste in new.

When, in his 1984 book on *The Latest Country Houses*, John Martin Robinson suggested that the new Stratton Park might have been a little impractical — for Baring soon moved on to another new house — Gardiner, the pathetic, pink-socked journalist and litigant (*Eyes passim*), tried to sue, but that is another story...

Perhaps readers know of other examples of distinguished architectural patronage by members of the Baring family.



The Ashmolean balustrading

1 **After sand-blasting**

2 **Untouched balustrades**

3 **Out of sight, out of mind?**

MY photographs show an example of patronage by another of Britain's great and selfless commercial dynasties: the Sainsburys.

Both depict the stone balustrade outside the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford which, thanks to the largesse of the Hon Tim Sainsbury, MP, is being changed from a stuffy old mausoleum into a bright market-led emporium for souvenirs.

Readers may recall how the smart young(ish) team of exhibition designers, Stanton Williams, unencumbered by any cultural baggage of respect for sophisticated old Classical buildings, has been commissioned to close the portico, dig up the garden in the front and direct visitors ("customers"?) straight into the basement shop.

Work has now started, alas. And, as Cockerell's old building looked a little grubby compared with a modern Sainsbury superstore, the contractors were encouraged to spruce it up a little. So, without taking any professional conservation advice, the workmen had a go at sandblasting the dirty old balustrade. Oh dear: as can be seen from these before and after photographs, the profiles of the balusters has been altered and bits have fallen off. Such an embarrassment! So the poor battered balustrade has now been boarded up to hide the damage from public gaze and, no doubt, when the new Ashmolean shop (with a museum attached) is unveiled, the balustrade will all be shining and bright and new thanks to Sir Tim's munificence.

WE MUST be thankful, I suppose, the Ashmolean was not given the sort of chemical clean that has irreparably damaged historic stone buildings all over Britain. Half the cleaned stone buildings in Glasgow, for instance, are now decaying faster than ever and are covered in green mould as over-enthusiastic chemical cleaning has changed the molecular structure of the stone and made it more porous.

So vigorous was the cleaning of Bearsden and Milngavie council chambers seven years ago, for instance, that large chunks are now falling off it. "The building is in a severe state of decline and that's mostly due to the previous treatment," remarks the chief executive in a rare outburst of honesty. Politicians usually dislike admitting they were wrong — and nobody challenges the monstrous hold chemical companies have over the stone-cleaning "industry".

'Piloti'

I started thinking about smell in 1965.

BRIAN ENO
Guardian Weekend

The group displays a rare awareness of the complex psychology behind the spirit-filled atmosphere of nocturnal urban architecture. As so often happens in their theatre work, they manage to trick the blasé urban sensibility into a delight at the battered and glittering mess of the late 20th-century cityscape.

Forced Entertainment, champions of the disoriented and dispossessed, necromancers of post-nuclear desolation, kitsch thespians and raiders of the trash media image banks, I hereby welcome you to the art world.

ROBERT CLARK
Guardian

The piles of second-hand clothes in the north gallery of the Serpentine are on the verge of becoming abject: they are without owner and therefore without function. Only the actions of the arriving visitors allows them the chance of resuscitation and re-animation.

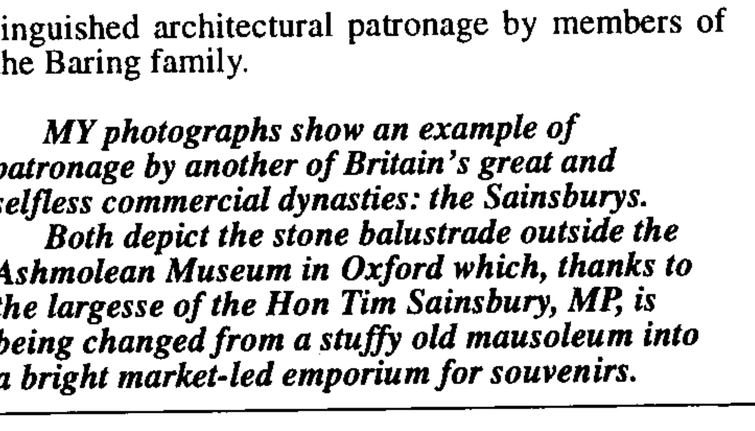
There is space for a wariness or even repulsion for these discarded clothes with unknown histories, as well as the attraction of being able to claim possession of them. They remain evidence of the absent human content. There is a potential sense of despair in realising the practical impossibility of sifting through everything, the lost opportunity of not being present in the gallery throughout the work's duration, a point at which the desire to take more requires examination.

CATHERINE WILKINSON
Letter to the Independent

Pseuds Corner

I've just been in New York on a Gabrielle Roth workshop called God, Sex and the Body, where men and women explored different male and female archetypes in the psyche through ritual theatre and dance.

The weekend reached a high spot for me when Michael, a six-foot butch American, put on a red Marks and Spencer dress, borrowed from one of the English boys. I'm told my own dance of



the father archetype with a five-foot blow-up penis attached to my lacy dress was quite amusing for everyone else.

We took over a bemused restaurant in drag, moving to a funky downtown rap club, Don Hill's, where none of the heavy heterosexual crowd seemed to notice that the men among my friends were in skirts. I was having such a good time that I had to be encouraged out of there by my younger friends at 3am, winning the Raver of the Course Award.

LYNNE FRANKS
Evening Standard

"Since I'm an artist I simply can't imitate another artist's work — it's my interpretation of some of his work," said Anthony Howell, founder of Theatre of Mistakes, who devised the event, which was accompanied by the warbling of 10 mini-keyboards operated by John White, head of music at the Drama Centre, London.

It climaxed with the female performers removing Howell's tuxedo and medal — "something to do with the RAF" — then emptying a dustbin full of International Klein Blue paint over him before hurling a pail of pigment at him. He then stood motionless for 10 minutes in front of a gold background as the audience left.

Guardian

Tom and Jerry cartoons deeply understand the primitive cannibalistic feelings that cannot help but exist in a species that needs to feed in babyhood from something that comes from its female parent's body.

VALERIE SINASON
Guardian

CONTRIBUTORS: P. Stein, G. Cornford, P. Barnes, T. Franks, C. Rowbotham, E. Murphy.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Goodnight Sweetheart (BBC1)

Game On (BBC2)

IT'S COMMON to say that a piece of work has had "mixed reviews", meaning that some were broadly favourable and some were broadly negative. In that sense, virtually everything gets "mixed reviews".

Here, though, are two series by some of the most famous television writers of the day which have both received not merely mixed but violently conflicting reviews: some ranking them among the great achievements of contemporary TV, others questioning how they ever reached the screen. How can two little sitcoms have provoked such divergent reaction?

Goodnight Sweetheart is by Lawrence Marks and Maurice Gran, whose *Birds of a Feather* allows BBC1 controller Botney to sleep easy in his bed on Sunday nights. It's said that every controller dreads the moment when his star ratings-grabbers decide to dig out the serious work they feel they have inside them. This is Woody Allen syndrome: inside every *Annie Hall*, there's an *Interiors* trying to get out. Carla Lane's *Bread* was so important to the BBC it had to let her get *Luv* out of her system. Esmond & Larbey responded to the smash-hit success of *The Good Life* by writing the gloomy and obscure *The Other One*. Perry & Croft may look happy enough writing *Dad's Army* and *Hi-de-Hi!*, but you can just bet they've promised themselves one day they'll do that one about the three Russian chicks living on some big estate with their pet seagull.

Goodnight Sweetheart is Marks' and Gran's serious work. The opening titles are heavily, presumably deliberately, reminiscent of those for Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective*, and the boys' intention is clearly to show us that they can do all that time-slip and multi-narrative stuff as well.

Nicholas Lyndhurst plays Gary, a 90s yuppie who has somehow discovered the ability to slip back at will to 1941. He falls in love with a war-time girl and thus is literally two-timing — you begin to see that this is cleverer than the average sitcom — his 1995 girlfriend.

In the first series, the time-traveller discovered that his 1941 sweetheart died in a later air raid, so he is, on his time-trips, screwing a ghost or even a corpse. This is dark and weird stuff for a sitcom, and must have been a shock for a controller hoping for another *Birds of a Feather*.

The studio audience responds gratefully to one very broad running gag. In 1941, Gary is a star singer-songwriter, with astonishing new songs like "Yesterday" and "Lady In Red". Most of the jokes play on this post-knowledge. A girl in 1941 laments that young Frank Sinatra is "too skinny". Gary authoritatively assures her: "Oh, he'll fill out." But, elsewhere, there are real subtleties. When Gary forgets himself and lets slip some 1990s piece of technological or linguistic usage, he claims to have picked up such stuff "in America" and is always believed, because America, to them, is the future. This a clever and true piece of cultural observation.

"I blame the media"

There is also a certain bravado in the way that Marks & Gran throw in obscure, virtually private jokes. Gary, for example, is being examined by a doctor in 1995, who assures him he has "a robust constitution. (Pause.) Unlike the United Kingdom..." Baffled silence from audience. "Sorry," says the doctor. "A little Charter 88 joke." Even more baffled silence. *Goodnight Sweetheart* isn't as good as it could be — like *Groundhog Day*, it ducks the really dark implications of the time-device — but anyone who moans about the homogeneity and safeness of the British sitcom should watch this daring genetic experiment and give some credit to Marks & Gran for using their clout in television to try something like this.

Game On, which has just ended its first series on BBC2, is another experiment by an established writer, Andrew Davies, who co-wrote it with the novice Bernadette Davis, although this is strictly the reverse of Woody Allen Syndrome in that Davies was writing something less serious than normal: a debut sitcom after serials and single plays. Writers of Davies's age are prone to regretful middle-aged sexual fantasy and actually writing a series about sexually promiscuous young people with a young woman seems likely to inflame the problem. Anyway, for that reason or another, *Game On* crackles with sexual tension.

You wouldn't really think that flat-sharing had another sit-com in it, but Davies & Davis have managed to find one, principally by locating a tone mid-way between the realism of *The Liver Birds* and the violent madness of *The Young Ones*. Each of the three flatmates is quite badly psychologically damaged: the woman is able to relate to men only sexually, and one of the men is an agoraphobic.

The BBC managed to bugger up the series at the start by screening the second episode first — the first contained jokes about boxing, and Gerald McLelland had been injured just before transmission — but it has settled down to achieve a formidable rating of four million viewers on BBC2. So mixed reviews — at least starkly mixed ones — sometimes merely mean that writers have taken risks.

'Square Eyes'

BIRTIE WOOSTER

MEDIA NEWS

RADIO One has set its hopes on the recruitment of "zany" redhead Chris Evans, the ex-*Big Breakfast* presenter who has been hired for a modest £350,000 to present the breakfast show and win back lost listeners.

The entrepreneurial Evans has insisted, however, that his production company, Ginger Productions, produce the show. The decision has peeved many of the smaller independents who fear that their juicy commissions will disappear if Ginger takes too much of the cake (Radio One has a target number of independents it aims to use each year).

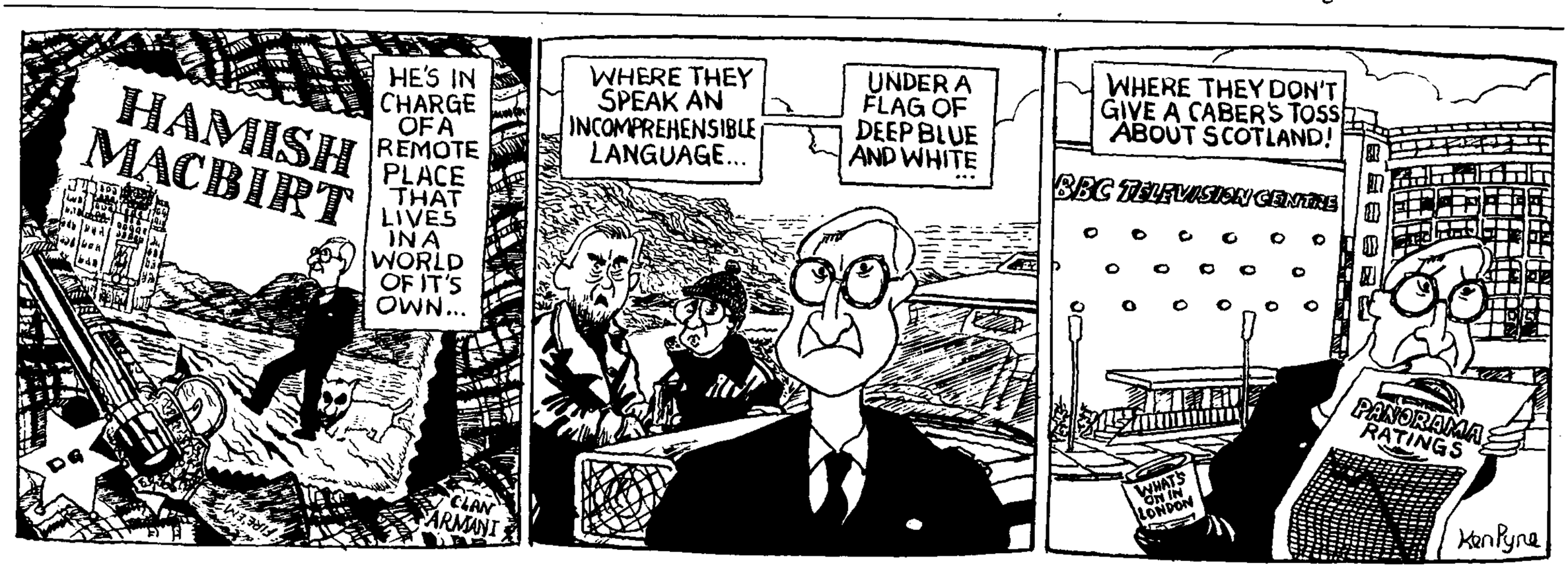
One independent definitely has its contract assured, however: Confederate Broadcasting, which is to continue producing Thursday night music programme *Soundbite* until Christmas. Confederate is also carrying out other projects for Radio One, including a feature on the Isle of Man TT races and a Live Aid anniversary show. Its contribution must please Radio One's head of production Trevor Dann. By happy coincidence he is also head of Confederate Broadcasting.

IT STARTED in newspapers, but the macho management practice of refusing to release staff defecting to rivals has spread to radio.

Virgin disc jockette Wendy Lloyd quickly attracted the attention of Richard Branson when the station opened, and she was promoted to the daily "drive time" slot, apparently destined for a long career at Virgin.

Bravely, however, la Lloyd decided earlier this year to take Matthew Bannister's loot and join the ailing Radio One. In the recent past, she would have been let go as soon as news of her betrayal became known. But in these competitive times contracts are being strictly enforced... so Lloyd has been downgraded to the prestigious weekday 2am night shift until her time is up.

This bodes ill for Steve Wright, who has spent the last couple of months trying to leave 1FM for the even more inadequate Talk Radio. He too is being held to contract and will be "filling in". Sunday mornings at 4am seems a likely place to find him until the end of August.


HAMISH MACBIRT
HE'S IN CHARGE OF A REMOTE PLACE THAT LIVES IN A WORLD OF IT'S OWN...
DG
CLAN ARMANI
WHERE THEY SPEAK AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE LANGUAGE...
UNDER A FLAG OF DEEP BLUE AND WHITE...
WHERE THEY DON'T GIVE A CABER'S TOSS ABOUT SCOTLAND!
BBC TELEVISION CENTRE
PANORAMA RATINGS
WHAT'S ON IN LONDON
Ken Pyne

CAN anyone explain why the BBC is suddenly desperately short of money (figures of £100 million are being bandied about) with cost-cutting measures being taken across the board and a dramatic halt to new commissioning of programmes?

Is it:

a) The failure of the men in suits who thought up Producer Choice?

b) The failure of the new men in suits brought in to cover up the failure of the old men in suits who thought up Producer Choice?

c) The failure of the even newer men in suits brought in...

d) The failure of John Birt to notice that employing 1000s of useless men in suits costs even more money than making decent programmes?

Answers on a postcard to Michael Grade.

ON A recent TV course, delegates from lowlier stations gathered to be lectured alongside their high-minded, scrupulous colleagues from the BBC.

The BBC is famously dedicated to equal opportunities, reminders of which are plastered across the bottom of all job applications. So some delegates were surprised to hear BBC head of newsgathering, Chris Cramer, give his views on equality of opportunity. Forgetting his PC guidelines he declared that the BBC needs "more tarts in the trenches".

I-BSkyB

11 TV heaven (3)?

Cryptic Crossword clue
The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: P. Grogan.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

THE ***Daily Mail*** **of the cable TV world, Channel One, recently lost four of its 30 videojournalists. They resigned over working conditions and a "hostile" office atmosphere.**

The last hack to leave had his bag searched for company property and was escorted from the building by bulky security men in true *Daily Mail* style.

To keep up the high standards of journalism for which the cable station is rapidly becoming known, the management replaced the experienced journalists with eager (and cheap) college leavers.

The strain continues at the 24-hour news station where an e-mail file for office gags was recently wiped off the company computer. It was found to contain a play on the company's slogan "News You Can Use..." A joker had added "...To Wipe Your Arse On". For some reason management did not see the joke.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! MY good friend the Duchess of York has finally flipped, I hear.

The poor lass is beside herself with rage over an impertinent children's book, to be published by the Bodley Head next month, which she imagines has in some way been "inspired" by her own saintly existence.

Written by 1960s Liverpool "poet" Roger McGough, the heroine of ***The Magic Fountain*** **is a porky princess called Gloriana who can hardly read or write but imperiously announces: "I have just wrote a story and I want it published."**

The duchess is clearly under intolerable stress. Those who work for her are instructed to curtsy every time they enter the room and address La Gloriana as "Smarm" ***("M'am", shurely?)***

HALLO! *MYSTERY surrounds the Prince of Wales's dim friend Lord Brockett, who is awaiting trial for the theft — curiously enough, from himself — of three vintage Ferraris and a Maserati worth £4.5 million.*

A recent guest to magnificent Brockett Hall in Hertfordshire reports looking out of their bedroom window on a cloudless, full-moon night... and seeing strange reflections in the lake.

"Och," joked an aged retainer. "That'll be his lordship's Ferraris!"

HALLO! THAT most elegant of pugilists, Mr Christopher Eubank, has been showing off his smart new Aston Martin Volante.

"It's the cat's whiskers, but if I wanted speed I'd have gone for a McLaren F1," he tells journalists. "It's not about speed, it's about being cool and deadly."

Er, quite so. Three years ago, on the A23 in Sussex, one Kevin Lawlor was of course knocked down and killed by a Range Rover driven by Mr Eubank. The "cool and deadly" boxer was later convicted of careless driving and fined the princely sum of £250.

HALLO! THE Duke of Kent's favourite theme on civic occasions is the heartwarming subject of "accepting responsibility".

So the Marquesa wonders if he will practise what he preaches when the health and safety executive prosecutes Balfour Beatty, the construction arm of engineering giant BICC, later this month for allegedly allowing a four-metre long steel bar to fall 50ft through a glass roof on to the passenger concourse at Westminster tube station last October.

How refreshing it would be if a company's directors resolved, just for once, that they — rather than their underlings — must face charges arising from an industrial accident!

BICC's directors include of course the Duke of Kent. But should His Kentness be nervous about presenting himself at Horseferry Road magistrates' court, he could always call upon fellow board member Lord (Geoffrey) Howe to put "iron" in his soul!

HALLO! *BUSY tycoon and Arsenal director Sir Roger Gibbs has set us all an example of fine family values.*

As chairman of the Wellcome Trust, he had his work cut out orchestrating the recent £14 billion takeover of Wellcome by Glaxo. But Sir Roger generously thought to appoint the merchant bankers Flemings as advisers for what is, after all, the biggest corporate take-over to date.

Sir Roger's sister Elizabeth is of course married to one Val Fleming (relation), Fleming's director and member of the founding family!

HALLO! TO ESSEX and the authentic period home of Teresa Gorman, where the whipless MP for Billericay confides that her memory has been playing tricks on her.

Teresa is to be hauled up before the select committee on MPs' interests, and all because in January 1990, when pleading in the Commons for the repeal of the rent act, she forgot to say that she and husband Jim ran two clapped-out bedsits in south London.

Instead she pleaded that repealing the silly act would encourage "the spirit of the kindly landlady; the type of landlady I had when I first left school and rented a room". No doubt she meant it, and reports that the Gormans' bedsit in Norwood was a fire-trap with dodgy electrics and an alarm that didn't work, were simply a cruel hoax.

Certainly a hoax is the inclusion of Teresa's name on a Texas-based *e-mail* dating agency called "Matchmaker". An impersonator, citing exciting biographical detail, announces coyly over the Internet: "I am not 'available', but I might do lunch." The real Teresa is computer illiterate. "I wouldn't know an *e-mail* if it got up and bit me," she says.

HALLO! *THE son of Baroness Blatch, young Jamie, needed a solid citizen to vouch for his curriculum vitae when he applied for a job on the BBC Radio training scheme recently.*

Who did he choose to give as a character reference? Why his mother's old chum John Major, of 10 Downing Street, London SW1.

Regrettably the PM's patronage may have nipped in the bud the career of a future John Humphrys. Poor Jamie's application was rejected.

HALLO! TO UDAIPUR, India, where the locals are still fuming over the behaviour of our dear royal snapper, Lord Lichfield.

Patrick and his crew stayed in the Shivniwas, a beautiful palace turned hotel owned by the Maharana of Udaipur, where they shot much of their very sophisticated 1995 Unipart tits 'n' arse calender showing girls with their kit off standing against exotic backdrops.

The Maharana was promised 100 copies of the finished article, plus a generous mention in the calender. But five calenders and no mention was the reply.

HALLO! *THE Marquesa hopes readers had an enjoyable break from "Bank Holiday Friday" through "Sunday 16th April" and on to "Bank Holiday Monday".*

I take these exciting new terms from English Heritage, who have decided to dump any reference to Easter and all its embarrassing Christian ramifications in its 1995 literature.

"This decision was reached in the light of the wide ethnic variety of our visitors," says Bob Ager, the development director of this go-ahead institution. It's good to know that our English Heritage is in such safe hands...

'The Marquesa'

DOING THE ROUNDS

GPs at the flagship first wave fundholding Taylor practice in north London have excused themselves from the scheme after over-spending by £100,000 for both referrals and drug budgets in the last three years.

As senior partner Dr Liane Taylor and her team put it: "We went into fundholding to be at the forefront of innovative patient care. This has proved, unfortunately, not to be the case.

"Fundholding has been divisory and has won us no respect or friends in the GP community in **Camden** and **Islington**. We find it dangerous and indefensible to have direct responsibility for limiting treatment on the basis of a fixed budget, and we can no longer condone management costs that do not benefit patient care directly."

● A NATIONAL survey of 493 GPs finds that 75 percent believe Mrs Bottomley's community care reforms have either worsened or failed to improve the service to patients. This represents a 9 percent increase on the 458 who said they were crap in 1993. Said Dr Arnold Elliot: "The situation is so serious, it's damnable."

● WILLIAM WELLS, chairman of **south Thames regional health authority**, has sent an illuminating letter to all the chairmen and chief executives of DHAs, FHSAs and trusts in his region. "Dear Colleague, I have been advised by a trust chairman within the region that his trust has received a circular letter from **Chesterton International plc** extending an invitation to consider the **many property management services that Chesterton offer**. As I am sure you are aware, I am a part time chairman of **Chesterton International plc** and the company **is considered a major player in the property and health related services market.** Hence the company's regular mailshots and approaches to relevant organisations across the country. The decisions about such action and the organisations that are targeted is not part of my remit and it would be natural for such mailings to encompass the NHS on occasions, considering the number of properties in the National Health Service's guardianship. I think it is timely to remind all of you that it is important that we have a responsibility to respond to staff, patients and suppliers **impartially**..."

● ANDREW "Dildo" Dillon, chief executive of **St George's healthcare NHS trust**, is not noted for his sense of timing. With staff still fuming at their 1 percent pay rise, Dildo has thrown in an annual £165 parking fee, far in excess of the average pay

"The chairman of Livingstone Health Trust, I presume?"

rise. Elsewhere, **Harrogate health care trust** has added a modest 166 percent rent rise to student nurse accommodation, including one home where there are mice in the kitchen, rotting shower curtains covered in mildew and a plethora of silverfish. And at the nearby **Friarage hospital** in **Northallerton**, rents are going up by 253 percent for "residences" where there are 13 staff to a bathroom and toilet, and 23 to a kitchen.

● THE nationwide shortage of junior doctors in casualty departments continues (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*) with managers at **Darlington memorial hospital** pleading with consultants from other specialties to cover the three vacant SHO posts. Thus far, only three of the 48 consultants have agreed.

● AT **Londonderry's Altnagelvin hospital**, a quarter of the nurses on some wards have applied for jobs in a new M&S store opening in Belfast in the summer. Meanwhile, surgeons at the **Royal Belfast hospital for sick children** had to cancel non-urgent operations from mid-March because of a shortage of anaesthetists. As consultant paediatric anaesthetist Robert Taylor put it: "The situation has been caused by resignations, staff illnesses and a lack of applicants for jobs. At present, two posts are unfilled, one anaesthetist is off sick and another is leaving within the year." A surgeon added: "Ours is the only specialist paediatric service in Northern Ireland. Its a disaster."

● AT **Birmingham's Heartlands hospital**, the embarrassing problem of lengthy trolley waits has been overcome by using "portable beds". These are trolleys with a "portable bed" sticker attached.

Heartlands looks set to absorb neighbouring £37 million **Solihull hospital** (*Eyes passim*), and managers are already targeting an MRI scanner that was paid for by Solihull residents from charitable donations to the "Skangaroo Appeal". They have shown less enthusiasm for Solihull's casualty department, which is closing its night service and looks set to shut completely.

● CHRISTIE STAPLETON, a four-year-old girl with a broken wrist, was told to come back tomorrow by staff at **Royal Devon and Exeter healthcare trust** because there was no operating theatre available for duty consultant orthopod Mr T. Bunker. Luckily for Christie, she was able to have it done straight away for £850 at the nearby **Nuffield private hospital**, by a Mr T. Bunker. The trust has since refunded the £850 and discovered that a theatre had been free after all. Whether the taxpayer will receive a refund for money needlessly squandered in the private sector is unclear.

Thought for the day: Nearly three quarters of first wave hospital trusts lost beds between 1991 and 1994, and two thirds increased their waiting lists.

M.D.

FROM HERE TO MATERNITY

1 - 29 APRIL

The Dick Institute, Kilmarnock

Glasgow Museums leaflet

● SINCE the patient's charter was introduced there has been increasing need for community health councils, which act as patients' watchdogs.

Now, however, the Association of Community Health Councils, the umbrella body which is a watchdog to the watchdogs, is having to investigate itself over the actions of its treasurer, Ross Thomson.

Mr Thomson had been working in two CHCs as acting chief officer. During his working week he would sometimes visit conferences and it is here that problems seem to have arisen. Thomson apparently got a bit muddled with his expenses forms and filled out more than the required one per conference.

The association, however, is keeping quiet about its treasurer. Chairman Toby Harris would only say: "Our treasurer has been suspended pending investigation by our auditors of alleged irregularities concerning his expenses."

DOWN ON THE FARM

DIRTY great mountains of shit — or *manure* as it used to be called — has been on the mind of Earl Howe, the ministry of agriculture's (Maffia) representative in the Lords. So much is being generated by our intensive livestock producers, they don't know what to do with it.

As always the taxpayer is being milked to help solve the problem. Howe has announced that £2 million of taxpayers' money will be spread over research projects telling farmers how to use the stuff — as if they did not already know.

Beneficiaries will be the Maffia's tame consultancy service, the agricultural development and advisory service (ADAS), which it is seeking to privatise. Good to know that when it comes to spreading the shit, the Maffia knows where to look...

THE Maffia has successfully seen off the parliamentary challenge (*Eye* 869) to its darling meat hygiene service (MHS). It did so by the simple expedient of transferring a debate on the "service" from the floor of the House — where it would almost certainly have lost — to a "standing instruments" committee.

With the committee stacked with loyal placemen, a favourable vote was a foregone conclusion. The smug Mrs Browning, junior agriculture minister, was able to wave *bon voyage* to her official's creation, setting off the gravy train into the next phase of destroying the meat industry with its meat inspection charges.

What puzzles commentators, however, is how Tory grandees could be induced to vote for an organisation which is not only going to cost more than *twice* the amount local councils charged to do meat inspection — paid for entirely by the meat industry — but is going to require funding of £15.4 million in the next year from the taxpayer.

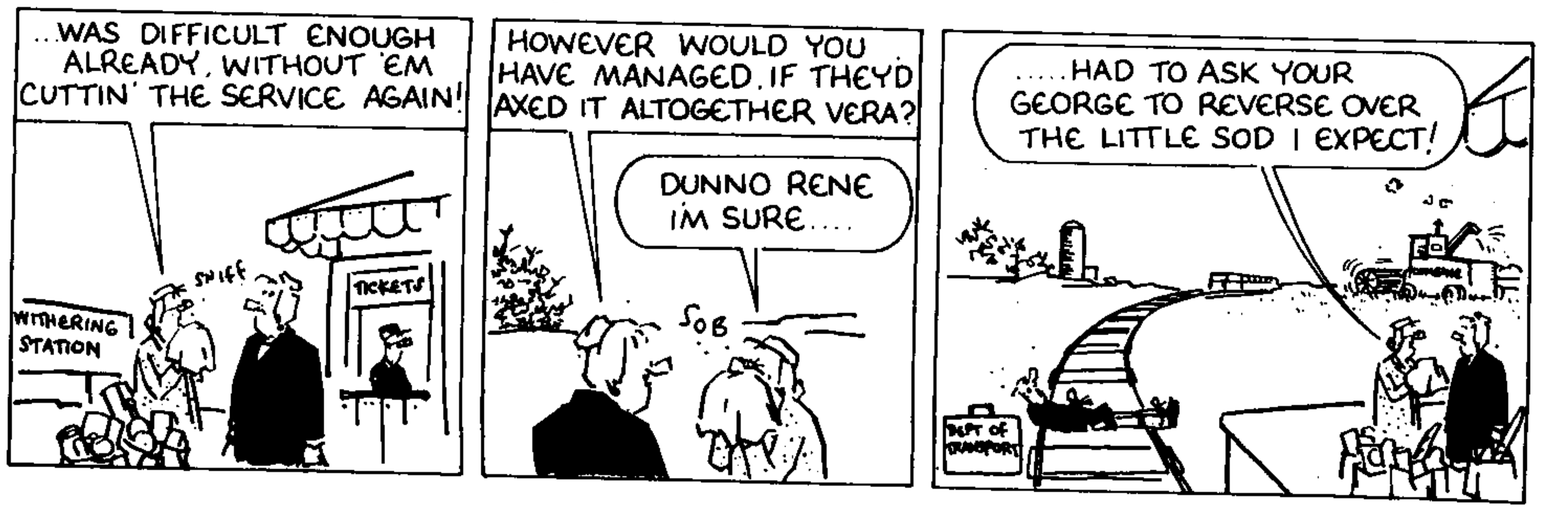
While Browning claims the MHS is going to be more "cost-effective", slaughterhouse owners take a different view. Over 200 — more than half the surviving industry — are pledged to refusing to pay their "share" of the £54 million the MHS is seeking to recover from the meat industry for its "services".

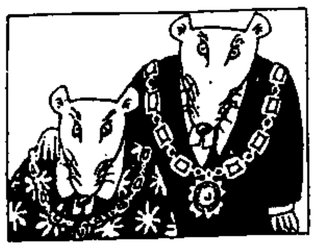
ONE Lancashire owner has learnt the meaning of "cost effectiveness". In the first week of the MHS's operation he was having to pay £14 an hour for a "standby" meat inspector for whom he had no use. When, after four days of highly paid idleness, the inspector was finally required to do some work for a longer than normal day, the slaughterhouse owner had to pay his overtime.

Under the local council regime under-employed meat inspectors did hygiene checks at local shops and the like, at no cost to the meat industry. But the MHS has no means of recycling its staff to cope with short-term fluctuations in workloads and is passing on the full costs of its inefficiency.

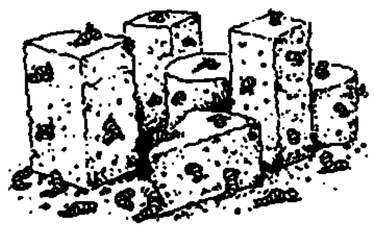
'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald


..WAS DIFFICULT ENOUGH ALREADY, WITHOUT 'EM CUTTIN' THE SERVICE AGAIN!
WITHERING STATION
SPIFF
TICKETS
HOWEVER WOULD YOU HAVE MANAGED, IF THEYD AXED IT ALTOGETHER VERA?
DUNNO RENE IM SURE....
SOB
.....HAD TO ASK YOUR GEORGE TO REVERSE OVER THE LITTLE SOD I EXPECT!
DEPT OF TRANSPORT
ALBERT



THE Rotten Borough Advertiser



DOING BIRD

WHEN the people of Walsall kicked out the Labour incompetents who had ruled them for years they hoped they would get an alternative leader. Instead they got a jack-in-the-box.

Mike Bird, a taxi-driver turned insolvency practitioner who is now leader of the Conservative group and council, won his soubriquet for the frequency with which he pops up to defend the borough's booming toxic waste industry, which has long had its eyes on Walsall's multitude of huge clay pits.

The toxic waste profiteers see the pits as the perfect repository for tens of millions of tons of waste, and have bought them as fast as they can. Their schemes have provoked fury among locals, who look to their council to protect them by refusing planning permission. But whom should they find springing to the defence of these firms? Er, step forward Mike Bird.

Back in February 1993 a Guernsey-based off-the-shelf company called Parkhill Reclamation announced a massive scheme for new clay workings and toxic waste dumping at Walsall Wood, close to people's homes. Parkhill called a public meeting — which was chaired by Mike Bird, who sang the praises of his hosts.

In May that year Parkhill announced a scheme for a massive open-cast coal mine, followed by more toxic dumping into the hole. Residents were horrified — but Bird immediately announced his group's unqualified support.

In November 1993 Bird launched a furious attack on Coun Grant Williams, one of his Lib-Dem coalition partners, for trying to block Parkhill's applications, eventually forcing Williams to withdraw his objections. And last year Bird reacted furiously to attempts by several Walsall councillors representing the affected areas, and to petitions by tens of thousands of residents, to have Parkhill's proposals subjected to an environmental impact assessment. Parkhill, he said, was doing "a fantastic job" for Walsall.

Why is Bird so keen on Parkhill? Could he possibly have been influenced by his hitherto unknown business links with its equally sinister sister firm, Parkhill Estates? Of course not. Not even if — as it now emerges — his firm was actually carrying out contracts for Parkhill Estates by setting up subsidiary companies at the same time Bird was pronouncing on Parkhill Reclamation's toxic dumping schemes.

Bird, who was also vice-chairman of Walsall City Challenge, which has given Parkhill Estates a £65 million contract for land reclamation, denies even knowing his firm was working for Parkhill, but local residents are suspicious. It all goes to show, as they say, that where there's muck there's, er, more muck.

AMSTER-DAMNED

THE ROW over Bent's Irish centre, recently investigated by Inspector Knacker and the VATman, rumbles on.

Although customs and excise is taking no further action, as reported last issue, the charity commissioners have ordered the receivers to go in and run the centre (which has charitable status). This has embarrassed the centre's boss, Brendan Mulkere, who had told everyone the commissioners were going to clear him.

The commissioners are annoyed that less than a third of the building is available for charitable purposes; that £400,000 of the centre's assets are tied up as surety in a loan agreement with a brewery (how apt); and that bills have been paid in cash. For the next six weeks civil servants will try to make sense of the impenetrable mess of invoices, receipts and bills while trying to unravel the, er, interesting accounting procedures. At least councillors now know what the next grant to the centre, of £30,000, will be used for: paying the commissioners' costs of bringing in the receivers.

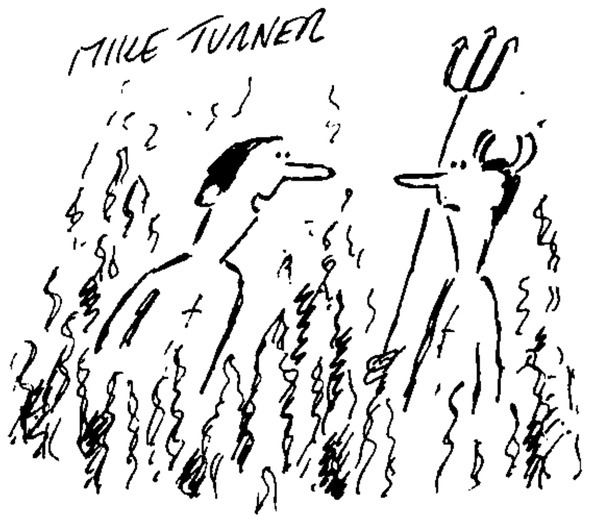
Meanwhile Bent's finance officers have finally twigged why the council's business unit recently announced losses of nearly half a million pounds. Accounts show that a staff meeting to discuss problems involving the loss making department was held in the VIP lounge at Amsterdam's Schipol Airport!

The business unit team flew from London for the day on an all-expenses paid trip and after a few hours hard slog went for a well-earned lunch. Now treasurers are desperately scouring the town hall for the receipt for the £500 which was helpfully changed into guilders so everyone could have some spendies on the mean streets of Amsterdam, famous for its sexy, er, tulips.

MORE ABUSE

STRATHCLYDE's inquiry into the removal of Ayrshire children from their homes amid allegations of child abuse concludes that nobody was guilty of anything and that social workers acted "honestly and in good faith".

The inquiry was conducted by two very independent assessors: Leslie Alyson, a social work consultant; and Brendan Kearney, legal services manager of Dumfries and Galloway regional council — which was kind enough to give Paul Lee a senior job after his post as director of social services in notorious Orkney was abruptly terminated by the island council.



"I like it here. Mind you, I lived in Lambeth..."

RED FACES OF THE WEEK

MARY SANDERSON, the art gallery worker sacked and accused of writing a poison pen letter, sat a spelling test as part of Wakefield council's highbrow investigation. Six workers took it to see if any spelt "councillor" as "counciller" as the poison pen writer had. All six wrote the word correctly. The original letter alleged legovers and accused one councillor of being "a senile, drooling pervert" and "chief jellyfish" and another as being a "slime slug".

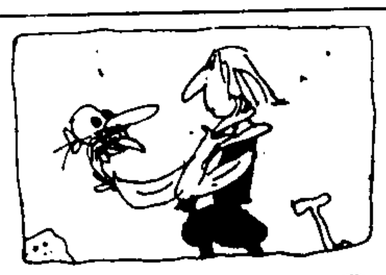
IN BRIEF

GLASGOW: Soon after Labour and the Liberals won a legal ban on *Panorama*'s "unfair" interview with the PM before the local elections in Scotland, 200,000 copies of the council's free "newspaper" hit the streets. Its 16 pages carried 20 photos of Labour councillors with nice comments about their achievements. Not one non-Labour member was featured. Council leader Pat "Tin Pan" Lally's picture appeared on five pages. All 20 were overwhelmingly returned to office.

NEWHAM: Labour councillors have jeopardised a £1.5 million lottery arts funding scheme by cutting funding from the Stratford-based Tom Allen arts centre. Newham has been negotiating with the National Lottery to build a new arts centre near the Tom Allen, funds for which will only be available if they complement *existing* facilities. If the Tom Allen closes, the lottery will pull out. Among councillors who voted for Tom Allen's closure are those who sit on the management committee of Theatre Venture — which will benefit from funds that should have gone to Tom Allen.

TAMESIDE: Labour councillors have drunk nearly £10,000 worth of booze on the quiet and at public expense. Even Inspector Knacker of Greater Manchester was shocked to find that one councillor had ordered eight bottles of wine and two bottles of £27 champagne on the chargepayer's slate. Councillors apparently hacked into the council ordering system and ordered bottles from the legitimate hospitality stock which were secretly delivered to various civic centre offices.

LAMBETH: Acting council chief executive Sari Conway has had her house ransacked, after weeks of threatening phone calls. Labour councillor Anna Tapsell, who asks awkward questions about the council porn-ring, has had her home phone number placed in a sex contact magazine, with predictable results. And it now emerges that one of the referees for press officer Iffat Aziz, who was moonlighting for Middlesex Probation Service, was chief executive of the time Henry Gilby. Oh, and lots of special needs officers in housing have been suspended amid allegations of a scam involving disabled parking badges.



LUVVIES

Sometimes I wonder how much the cake business has hurt the serious actress image.

JANE ASHER
Independent on Sunday

● ***Special mention for Luvvie trying to think:***

"Sexual ethnic cleansing..."

SIR PETER HALL
on the trial of Oscar Wilde
BBC2

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

HUSBAND
'Scuse me Sir, you were seen slipping some bottles into your WINE STORE jacket!
Oh yeah.. Well you're wrong, it aint my jacket!
I nicked it from M+S next door!

SIGNAL FAILURES

ANGLIA Railways, serving Norfolk, Suffolk and North Essex, hopes to be the first BR splinter group to screw up Britain's standard range of rail tickets.

Among changes it plans to introduce next month is a replacement for one of the most popular discount tickets, the SuperSaver. The likely successor is a ticket that has to be bought at least 24 hours in advance and is valid on specified trains.

To avoid a sudden fare increase, all SuperSaver users would have to make an additional journey to their nearest staffed station (often a long way away in rural Norfolk) before the date of travel. The ticket won't be valid unless they ride on the trains they specified in advance.

ANOTHER widely-predicted symptom of BR's fragmentation is typified by the situation at St Albans city station, run by Thameslink.

Although it is on the InterCity line from London to Derby and Sheffield, locals can no longer get timetables at the station for trains to those cities because the InterCity trains are run by the Midland Main Line division. Midland Main Line says St Albans City is the responsibility of Thameslink, but Thameslink says it's not interested in providing information for Midland Main Line.

The useless rail regulator, employed to knock together the heads of puerile shadow franchises like these two, says the issue is a matter for the BR board — which says timetables are available free by post.

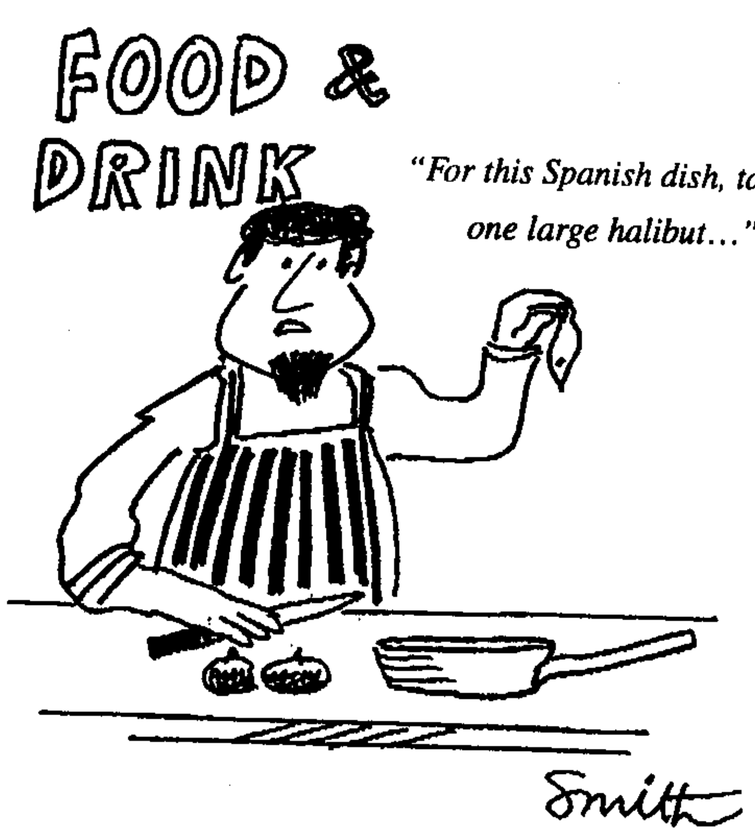
ELECTRIC trains from St Albans' other station, Abbey, are to be replaced by 1960s diesels because there aren't enough suitable trains for North London Railways to run all its services.

Despite this and other obvious shortages of rolling stock, BR didn't ask for quotes for any new trains in 1994 (a year in which Germany ordered new trains worth more than £5 billion) and ABB, one of the last major train builders in Britain, has said a "substantial rundown" of its factories is inevitable.

DETERMINED to spend the minimum on rail infrastructure in connection with the Channel tunnel, the UK has come up with another amateur method for Eurostar trains from Edinburgh and Newcastle to bypass London.

Having given serious thought to shunting them into an old siding at Willesden (*Eye* 859), Railtrack has reverted to the old plan to send them through Hampstead on the North London line. The Eurostars are wider than the normal trains on that line, and a trick has been thought up to avoid spending valuable petty cash on clearing wider spaces around the tracks: only one Eurostar may be allowed on the North London line at a time, so they won't smack each other as they pass.

'Dr B. Ching'



Letters

Private Eye

Wuthering arts

Sir,

Good to see that, at a time when the PANORAMA *debate is grabbing the headlines on most media pages, the* EYE *is maintaining its coverage of arts television. However, I would like to correct some of the inaccuracies in your piece about* CHARLOTTE BRONTE UNMASKED. *The "posse" of Bronte Society council members who marched on Wood Lane was in fact a duo who came for an amicable meeting. The film did not go over its budget, nor were any filming days cut short. Charlotte Cory was not employed as a presenter, but as a contributor. The* BOOKWORM *magazine programme had the highest average viewing figure of any arts programme on television last year and the audience research was very positive. The alleged "Westminster School Mafia" in the BBC's music and arts department is a fantasy. It consists of two people in a department of over 200.*

Yours faithfully,
KIM EVANS,
Head of Music and Arts, BBC Television.

Briefs encounter

Sir,

Right now I am compiling DOUGHBOYS IN THE PACIFIC, *a fiftieth anniversary annal celebrating the successes of the allied forces in the South Seas, and to be released in honour of VJ Day.*

Glancing through your organ recently, I happened on a file photo of one of our boys, a haggard and corpulent yet jubilant GI, whooping it up with one of the native gals. The soldier was out of uniform and down to his skivvies (understandable in that Pacific heat) so I could not make out his rank or battalion. If you would reprint that pic, together with a short 'n' sweet anecdote, I'd be mighty obliged.

Yours truly,
Maj. RED "FIREBALL" TOMKINS (Ret),
American Forces Command, Midway.

● *Many thanks for more than 100 letters on this subject — Ed.*

Chapter and verse

Sir,

The Prison Office spokesman's statement "They are reaping the whirlwind they have sown" is hardly deserving the mockery of inclusion in Colemanballs (868). The lady who forwarded it is obviously unfamiliar with the Old Testament: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind", (Hosea VIII.7).

Do I qualify for £10 for exploding a Colemanball and putting the wind up your contributor?

Yours faithfully,
B. HOOPER,
Saffron Walden, Essex.

Wrong wavelength

Sir,

Michael Carley (Letters, 869) asks what generates the power delivered by the Rance barrage near St Malo. It is not wavepower as Michael wishes to imply but tidal power. A tidal barrage such as La Rance generates power from the flow of water due to the rise and fall of the tide.

Michael might be interested to know that the UK has some of the highest tidal ranges in the world, making it ideal for tidal barrage schemes, the Severn and the Mersey being the best. However, to paraphrase Dr Bob Everett (Letters, 869), the lack of a proper tidal power programme in the UK is a scandal that gets few words in the press elsewhere. I trust the lack of an energy policy from our government will continue to be lampooned in your pages.

Yours sustainably,
ANDREW GEENS,
Whitchurch, Cardiff.

Sir,

Re: "Wave Power". Dr Bob Everett (869) cites the Islay wave power plant as rated at "75 million billion picowatts".

A million billion is 10 to the power 15; a picowatt is 10 to the power of -12. So what he actually said was "75 x 10 to the 3 watts", or 75 kilowatts.

Why express it in the way he did? Either to make the figure sound larger, or he was mistranscribed.

However, I agree with him otherwise.

Yours,
PHIL NASH, BSc, MA,
Chippenham, Wilts.

Dog tag

Sir,

Sorry to be pedantic, but describing an alsatian's tongue as "resembling a fat scarf" (Literary Review, 868) is a simile, not a metaphor.

Yours,
TERRY KEALY,
Bovingdon, Herts.

Prozact of God

Sir,

Re: Miracle Corner, EYE *869. It is indeed unfortunate that millions of Alzheimer's sufferers will no longer be able to take heart from Ernest Saunders' miracle cure. But look on the bright side! Now that we know that his illness was probably only a bout of depression, just think of the morale boost he has given to countless inmates all over the country who will no doubt be looking forward to freedom on similar grounds!*

Yours faithfully,
DR P. LEONARD,
Ealing.

Lookalike

Clarke

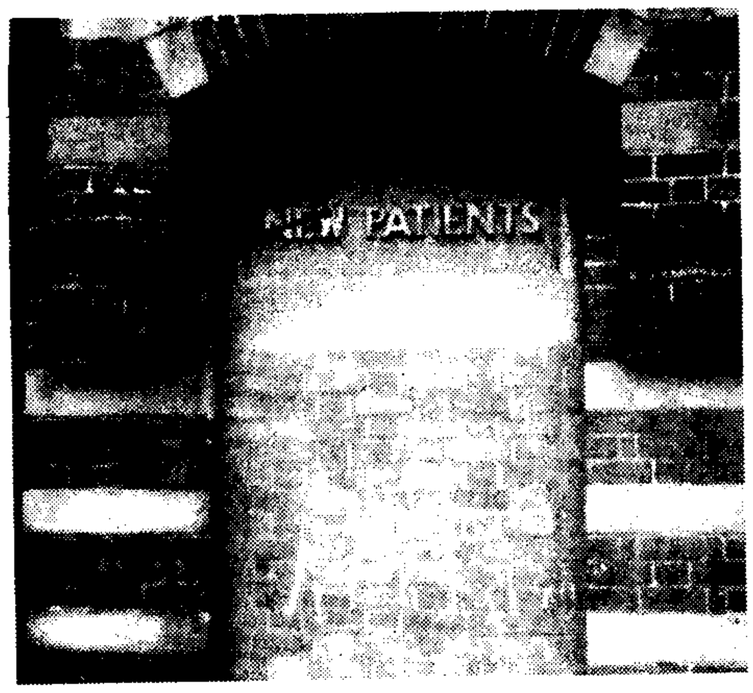
Monro

Sir,

Is it just my imagination or is there an uncanny resemblance between the golden crooner Matt Monro and the current chancellor, Kenneth Clarke?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID STONES,
Edgerton, Huddersfield.

I-SPY *Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast*



Submitted by Dennis Cassidy. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Road worthy

Sir,

Your correspondent Cllr Charles Gordon, Strathclyde roads supremo, doth protest too much. Not only Piloti, but a succession of experts have looked at his prized motorway schemes and found them completely barmy.

He complains that the £53 million M77 doesn't go through Pollok Park. This is mere hair-splitting: the road wipes out the western woodlands of Pollok Estate, which contains Pollok Country Park as well as the green belt and farm land surrounding it. The freedom of access to all 1,118 acres of Pollok Estate was granted to Glasgow's people in 1911 by its owner, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, and this pledge was further strengthened in the historic 1939 conservation agreement, the first in Scotland.

If Cllr Gordon doesn't want to build the five-mile M74 extension, at a cost of £45 million per mile, why is his council seeking planning permission for it? Thanks to Charles Gordon, the motorway will not be imposed by the Scottish office, it will come gift-wrapped by departing Strathclyde!

As for chairman Gordon's "announcements" (or are they "edicts"?) his "scrapping" the roads schemes had more to do with diverting attention from the raging unpopularity of the M77 than with real policy. He "scrapped" the M74 extension and yet, like Lazarus, the monster has come back from the dead. Despite "scrapping" all these schemes, they remain in the Strathclyde structure plan.

His other "announcements" are equally worthy. His public relations officers show beautiful pictures of trams and trains, but no money is in the pipeline for them. Meanwhile a real motorway is being bulldozed through the open space and woodlands of Pollok Estate and areas of multiple deprivation in the southwest of the city.

Yours sincerely,
ALICE MOSLEY,
Secretary, Glasgow for People.

Rink outsider

Sir,

I did warn you in my letter on the former Richmond ice rink (EYE *868) about our local obsessive Richard Meacock. Yet in the same issue, in the Rotten Borough Advertiser, you publish several of his discredited allegations!*

Your readers should know that Mr Meacock has twice been to the local ombudsman and twice been told that he has no case. In particular the ombudsman said that the so-called illegal secret meeting, at Richmond council in September 1989 was "not illegal, improper or unusual". But Mr Meacock doesn't want the facts to get in the way of a good smear.

Copies of the ombudsman's letters are enclosed. Please contact me if you want any further information.

Yours,
Coun DAVID WILLIAMS,
Leader of the Council, Richmond-upon-Thames.

Penal envy

Sir,

In EYE *869 you print a funny "joke" in the form of a nursery rhyme, the "humour" of which is a Muslim having his foot amputated for stealing a pig.*

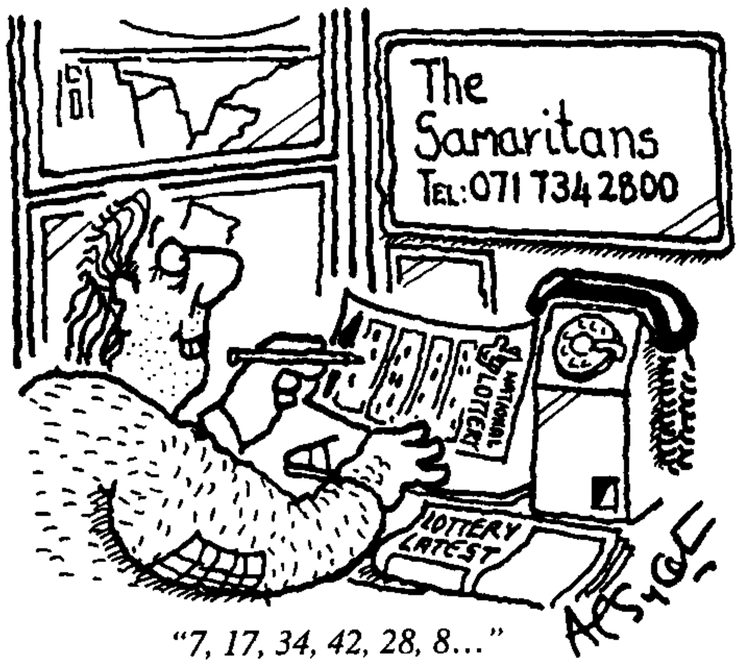
Unfortunately this is impossible in Islamic Law. There is, as is well known, amputation of hands for theft, but Islamic Law does not punish the theft of things that are hateful to Islam, such as alcohol, or, in this case, pigs, and certainly does not punish this by amputation. Your "joke" is thus based on ignorance, and is simply wrong.

The Islamic Penal System is a thing known only to non-Muslims at the level of silly mistakes like your own. In fact the Islamic Penal System is probably the kindest and most gentle penal system that ever existed. Your readers may find this a rather amazing assertion. I can only refer them to my book ISLAM AND PUNISHMENT *which proves this in simple language that even your writers could understand.*

PRIVATE EYE *is a great friend of the Muslims, as the stance on Bosnia proves. Please do not spoil this by silly "jokes".*

I suggest that instead you make "jokes" about the electric chair, and life imprisonment in the mad house that is the English Penal System.

Yours sincerely,
DR MUHAMMAD HAROON,
Director, The Raza Academy.



"7, 17, 34, 42, 28, 8..."

Emergency exodus

Sir,

I'm no theologian but suggest to Jonathan Balcombe that Dr Goldstein's actions may have been inspired by God's word given to Moses as the Israelites entered the promised land.

Deuteronomy 7:

1. When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out many nations...

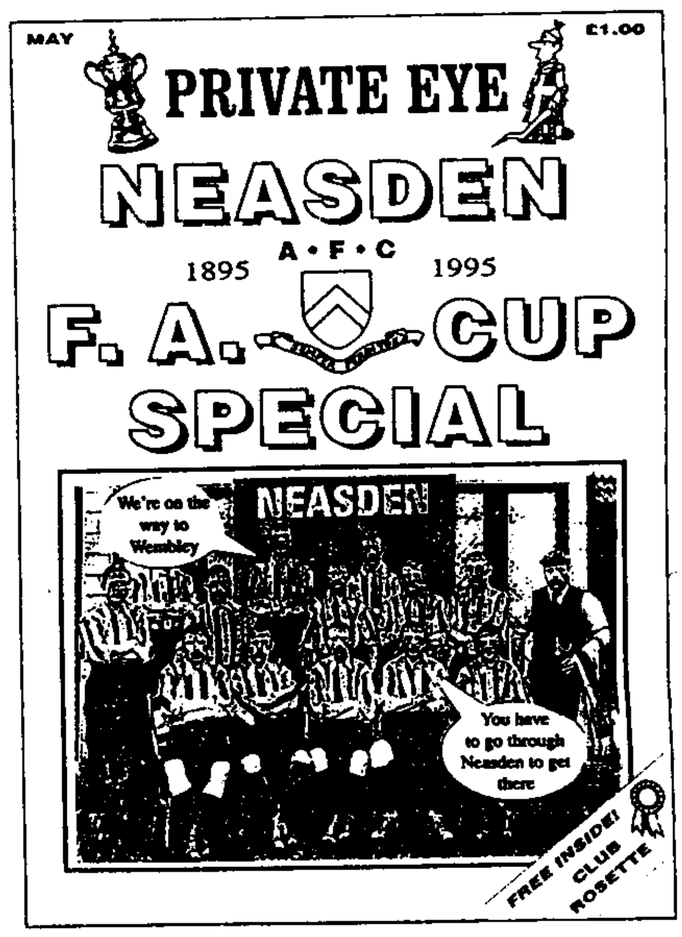
2. — and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you, and you have defeated them then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

16. You must destroy all the peoples the Lord your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity.

Mr Balcombe may also care to review Exodus 13-5, 23-31, 34-15 and Numbers 33-55.

Yours in possession of a Bible,
D.MCDONALD,
Aberdeen.

ON SALE END OF APRIL — £1



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Caller: *It's my 29th birthday today.*
Presenter: *Really? Wow! So when's the big 3-0?*
Caller: *Next year.*
Talk Radio UK
(Anon)

"And I suppose they [Spurs] are nearer to being out of the FA Cup now than any other time since the first half of this season, when they weren't ever in it anyway."
JOHN MOTSON, BBC
(A.D. Hopkins)

"... and he crosses the line with the ball almost mesmerically tied to his foot with a ball of string..."
IAN DARKE, Radio 5
(Sean Ottewell)

"They've really got the bit between their legs now..."
BOBBY HAM, Pulse Sport
(Alistair Durden)

"We want a game where the players are beyond repute."
ALAN SMITH, GLR
(David Hathaway)

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG or e-mail to strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk (marked "For Publication"). And the Eye's WWW page is now available: http://www.intervid.co.uk/intervid/eye/gateway.html

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN

STAND UP TO THESE FALSE ACCUSATIONS..
ARMS DEAL SCANDAL
TAKE UP THE SWORD OF TRUTH AND THE SHIELD OF HONOUR.
I SOLD THEM TO THE PERSIANS.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "It was a revolting sight," Detective Motlotlegi Tshwenyego of the Kweneng Criminal Investigation Department told reporters. "People were begging Mr Maganu to stop, but he just kept grunting and repeating, 'This way both of us can have lunch' and carried on eating. The man would not listen to reason."

Detective Tshwenyego had been called to Sasakwe, in Kweneng District, to investigate complaints of cruelty. "By the time we got there it was already too late. Apparently Maganu liked a bit of liver for his lunch but, while he was in another room, his dog had

eaten it. So Maganu took a knife, grabbed the dog by the throat, took it outside and, despite the pleas of onlookers to spare its life, slit its stomach open. Then he removed its liver and began to eat it raw, while the poor creature writhed on the ground, gasping for its last breath. One old woman passed out, while an outraged neighbour tried to punch Maganu in the face. Unwise for, as the elders say, do not get into fights with ugly people — they have nothing to lose.

"We asked him to desist, but he told us that the dog had eaten his food and therefore he had a moral duty to eat the dog. Then he belched, asked if anybody had a toothpick, and threw the remains of the dog in the road. There's no law enabling us to prosecute Maganu for cruelty. It was his dog and, after all, it did steal his food. So we fined him for littering." *(Botswana Gazette, 18/1/95. Spotter — Anon)*

—●—

● "Editor: If the government is serious about combating racism, they must start with the game of pool. In this game, it is the white ball that is always hitting the other multi-coloured balls, ending with the last, black, ball which has to be 'put down'. During the course of the game, if the black ball is mistakenly potted too soon, then the game is over and the person responsible automatically loses. Why should this be so? It smacks of racism.

"Instead this game in Zimbabwe should be changed so that the black ball is the one that hits the other balls, especially the white one. This will teach our young brothers that black is equal to white, if not better. Please, chiefs, do something about this game. Soon it will be too late, and once you've buttered your bread you must sleep in it!"

"Carlos the Menace, Mufakose." *(Letter to Zimbabwe Herald, 1/2/95. Spotter - Athol Desmond)*

—●—

● *"The best thirty quid I ever spent," was how Michael Howerd described the deed poll administration fee he'd just paid. "It'll be worth it just to watch my bank manager's face as he writes the cheque."*

Howerd, a customer of the Horsforth branch of the Yorkshire Bank in Leeds, had become disillusioned with their services after they had charged him £20 for running up a £10 overdraft. So he changed his name by deed poll to Mr Yorkshire Bank Plc Are Fascist Bastards, and demanded that the

bank give him a cheque book and card in his new name.

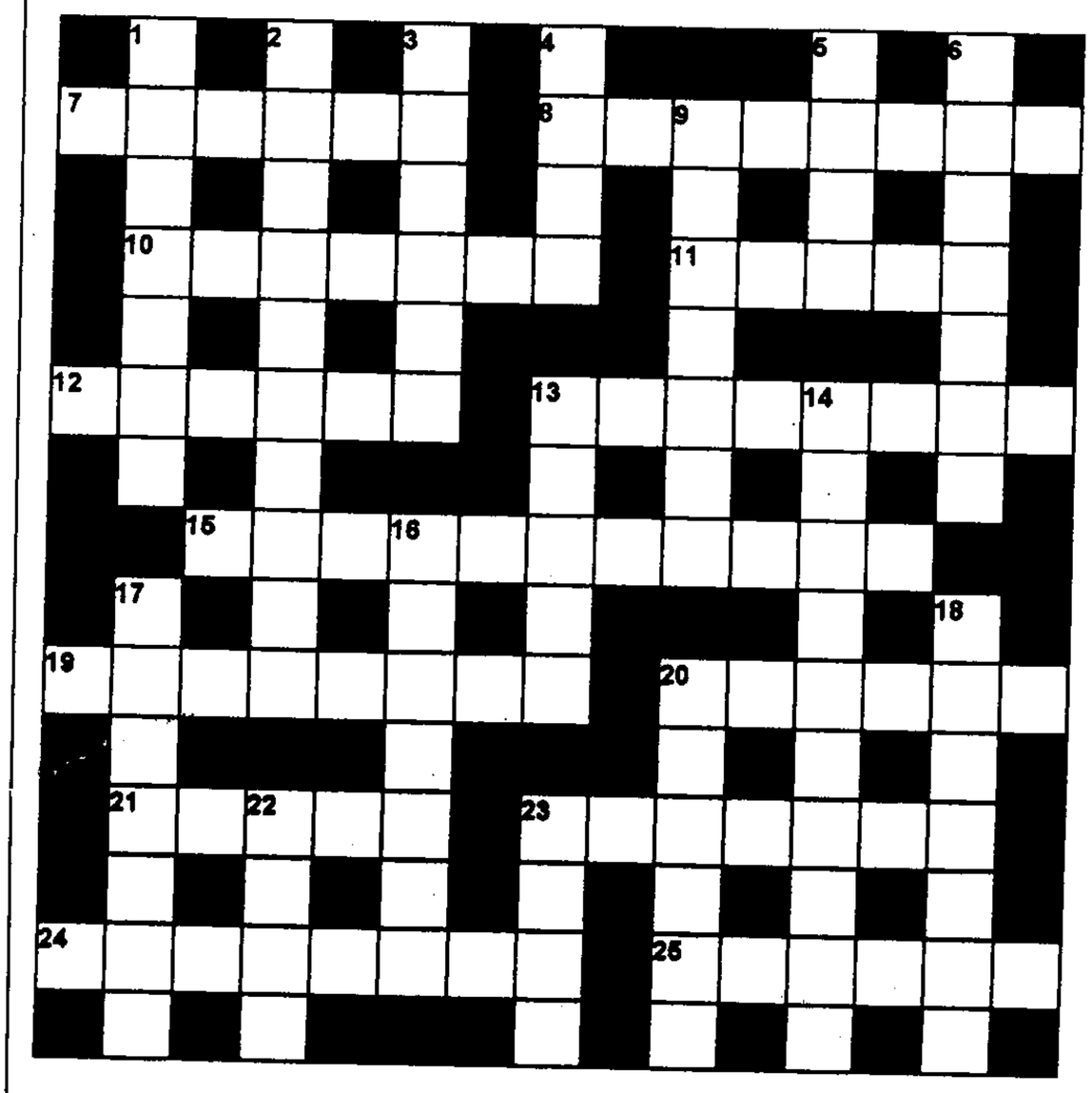
They duly obliged, but a spokesman for the bank later confirmed that Mr Yorkshire Bank Plc Are Fascist Bastards has now been asked to take his account elsewhere. (Hull Daily Mail, 3/2/95. Spotter — Howard Baker)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 26 by Cyclops

£100 Winner D. ALLEN



ACROSS

7 That bloody dictator Eve needs to get rid of fat belly (3,3)
3 A Maxwell without good side, this right-wing hack! (8)
10 Fergie chewed cud with former German deputy (7)
11 State aid bungled by House (5)
12 (see 13dn)
13 Political con? (8)
15 Her column warms hearts of those people at One, Random Square (3,8)
19 Now there's another generation of arseholes backing Afrikaner movement (4,4)
20 Main barrier in front of Brenda's joint (6)
21 Conservative leader joins Sky, with sod all capital (5)
23 Major is just about switching wiper on (2,5)
24 Tosser's success? Balls! (8)
25 It's good getting bound by leather straps, as Brenda does (6)

DOWN

1 Frosty found on top of Evelyn, it's reported — isn't that affair supposed to be over? (4,3)
2 *Observer* has taker for autobiography Maggie didn't want (10)
3 RT news broadcast distributed by tossers? (6)
4 Resistance units in Brenda's employ (4)
5 Hovis ad carrier dropped traveller's endorsement (4)
6 ING fiddled round figure bloody cut (7)
9 One collared by crap jumped-up American gets the Japanese treatment (7)
13/12 Merseyside big spender, Clive's partner, capped — about time (5,6)
14 Do as Maxwell was fond of doing, son: mounting a hack without hesitation (5,1,4)
16 (see 20)
17 Unable to shift out of bed, lacking the common touch (5,2)
18 Darren messed with Ecstasy, the bum (4,3)
20/16 Corrupter, mud stirring hard man in the rag business (6,7)
22 The French put unconscious drives first — viz, Eric (4)
23 Hint: Radio Taki would be rather too much! (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 28.04.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 25

ACROSS: 6 Ergo 7 Nehru 8 Leak 9 Silent Majority 10 Employee 12 Callow 13 Inquest 15 Psychic 18 Studio 20 Colonial 22 Gerrymandering 24 Hurd 25 Names 26 Cuts

DOWN: 1 Crossman 2 Poll 3 Chamber 4 Subjects 5 Castro 7 Nancy 8 Lord Lucan 11 Laundered 14 Stormont 16 Irangate 17 Economy 19 The Sun 21 Leeds 23 Itch

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

My trip to America has been acclaimed as a not unhistoric success. Mr Clinton remembered at once who I was and listened very carefully while I explained why he was wrong about Ireland. Then he said: "That's very interesting John, but it is time for my saxophone practise. Have a nice day."

Showing me out, one of Mr Clinton's aides told me that "The President must think a lot of you, bud. You got a whole two minutes." I asked him how long Mr Adams had got and he said "Only 12 hours", and gave me a baseball cap saying "Vote Clinton!" This shows the special relationship is very much alive indeed. Oh yes!

Tuesday

I am in no small measure annoyed with the BBC for not showing my brilliant interview with Mr Dimbleby. They say that they were told not to broadcast it by a Judge in Scotland on the grounds that it would prejudice the result of the Scottish elections.

"That is ridiculous," said Mr Hanley. "No one would vote for you after seeing it."

Perhaps Mr Hanley will have to look for a new job in the summer after all.

Wednesday

As it happens, Mr Hanley was wrong. We have lost all our seats in Scotland, even though the broadcast did not go out. He really is hopeless. He went on the radio to say that the result was a typical mid-term hiccup. I was not convinced at all.

A lot of people are now saying that it is time for me to go. Well I have got news for them. I am going. Oh yes. I am going to stay.

(This joke was written for me by Mr Morris Norris who helps me with my off-the-cuff remarks).

Anyway who could possibly replace me as leader? I have drawn up a list of so-called stalking horses, just like they do with the Grand National and have written their "form" beside the names.

THE LIST

Mr Clarke. Hopeless. Too many gaffes.

Mr Hurd. Hopeless. And too old.

Mr Heseltine. Hopeless. And has a bad heart.

Mr Portillo. Hopeless. And too clever.

Mrs Bottomley. Hopeless. She will have to go.

I read them out to my wife Norman over our new breakfast cereal which we had bought in an American supermarket. It is called Pablo's Original Tortilla Chips. It tastes rather odd with milk. I asked Norman whether she thought I had left anyone hopeless off the list. She gave me a funny look and said: "What about the favourite?"

Thursday

My friend Mr Aitken has been in the newspapers again, in a lot of stories about him and various Arabs. The headlines all say that he should resign which is an improvement on them saying that I should resign.

In fact I was so grateful to Mr Aitken for this that I agreed to let him use my autocue for his impromptu denial of the stories and his announcement of a great crusade against the press.

"I am going to sue the lot of them, Prime Minister," he told me.

"But how can you afford to sue everyone?" I asked him. "Since litigation is so expensive — as I know from my own experience when they said I had not had an affair with the cook."

"Money is no object," said Mr Aitken. "I've made so much from these Arabs over the years that I won't even notice it. Even if I lose, which I probably will."

Friday

Mr Aitken has not acted a minute too soon in my judgement. Another member of my government has been exposed by the newspapers. It is a Mr Spring who I had not heard of until he wrote to me and resigned.

Anyway, the press invaded his privacy and scandalously revealed that he spends his Sunday evenings innocently going to bed with a friend of his and the friend's girlfriend. This is appalling.

Mr Hanley agreed. "This is appalling," he said, showing me the *News of the World*. "Listen to what he says about your wife." Then he read it out to me.

"Norman is a little cracker but the poor thing only gets it once a year from her husband because he's such a wimp." I thanked Mr Hanley for his kindness in pointing this out and then made a decisive decision as I always do.

"Mr Spring must resign immediately. Thank goodness the newspapers have got their eye on people like that."

When I went home upstairs I found my brother Terry had let himself in and was busy talking to Norman.

"Is it really once a year?" he said. "It wasn't like that with Mrs Kierans. Though of course I did not put that in my book out of respect for him."

I was in no mood whatsoever to listen to my brother's reminiscences. "If I wanted some smut," I told him in my stern telling-Mr-Blair-off voice, "I would watch *Blind Date*."

"Perhaps you should go on it," said Norman, rather missing the point as usual.

Saturday

A very quiet weekend. No one resigned at all and there was no sleaze anywhere. Mr Aitken's sword and shield are obviously doing a good job in cleaning up the cancer of irresponsible newspapers.

Easter Sunday

Thank goodness for the Sunday Times, who attacked Labour's Mr Prescott who is clearly up to his neck in corruption. Apparently someone bought him a drink in a pub in 1973 and he did not declare it in the Members' Interests Book.

This shows at last what we Conservatives have known all along. It is the *Labour* party which is the party of sleaze and is not fit to govern as long as I am Prime Minister. Which I am. Oh yes.

Easter Monday

Our friends in the press have scored another triumph for truth and fair play by attacking Mr Blunkett and his dog. Under the headline "Blind Drunk with Power" the Daily Mail revealed just what Blunkett would do to the teachers if Labour were ever let into power — i.e. sack them and close down the bad schools.

Everybody knows this is our idea and the Labour Party are so sleazy and corrupt that all they can do is steal ideas from us.

Mr Blair is even trying to steal my job. But I am here to stay, oh yes, as I told my wife Norman.

"Oh no!" she said.

"We are not in a pantomime," I told her.

"You could have fooled me," she replied.

CHESTER SQUARE SW1

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your v. sympathetic p.c. re M. in the Daily Telegraph photograph where the old girl was being held up by two security men. I agree that she was not looking her best, but a bottle and a half of scotch before breakfast, as you and I well know, can weaken the knees even of the strongest. M., as you know, has always liked a snort but more so of late. Personally I blame Major for letting things slip. She certainly does. The other night sitting in her chair, having screamed a good deal, she launched into an un-characteristically lurid attack on him, claiming that he had never been "one of us" and she must have been "temporarily insane" to entrust him with her life's achievement of eradicating socialism from these islands.

There has also been, I will admit, the contributing factor of the Boy Mark. Some malodorous and red-nosed New Zealander called Hallowheen has been through the press cuttings and produced a book about him in collaboration with someone who knows how to spell. Knowing my distaste for the subject, you will understand the eager anticipation with which I opened it, hoping at last for a stake that could be driven through the vampire's heart. But, alas, the Maori piss-artist had only managed to discover one new scrap of tattle i.e. that the wretched son and h. had arrived in the Middle East with a signed chitty from the boss saying that, unlikely as it might seem, the bearer was her son and she hoped that people would make allowances for him – ideally to the tune of several million petro-dollars.

Margaret, needless to say, treated this pathetic bundle of old rope as a cue for fresh lamentations, wailing in the small hours and beating her head against the cocktail cabinet. "My poor innocent son! I know what it is like to be slandered by these inhuman thugs. Now they are suggesting that he has had his hand in my foundation and has been disowned by his father-in-law Mr Burgerdorf. This is the fall of the House of Thatcher. We shall not see its like again."

As if this were not enough, the doorbell rings well past midnight and the cause of all the trouble arrives on the doorstep heavily muffled, wearing a false beard against recognition by the encamped reptiles, and asking if we could lend him a few million to see him over the weekend. Fortunately M. was upstairs under sedation and I was able to take him into the wine cellar and give him a very large piece of what was left of my mind. Not that it will have the slightest effect. Having cursed me roundly – "a pathetic hen-pecked old soak" to use his exact words – he flounced out into the night, saying he could raise the money in five minutes from Jeffrey Archer.

I wish this was the end of the story. Carol is in the throes of writing my biography – "Life With Father". She comes round with her notebook at all hours of the day and night trying to get me to remember at least one anecdote from the past. Mercifully, it is all a purple haze and she is having to make it all up with the help of a Mr Sherrin in Chelsea.

Shall I see you in Portugal? The widow Flack is having the other hip done but that should not prevent her from ladling out the snorts.

Yours on the Zimmer,

Denis

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber THE GRAUNIAD

Correction

In our report on Mr Aitken's involvement with a number of distinguished Arabian businessmen an unfortunate typographical error was introduced. Thus the sentence read "Aitken tried to procure girls for the Arabs". This should of course have read "grills", a favourite snack for Middle Eastern dignitaries, and it was quite understandable for Mr Aitken to provide grills for his friends at any time of day or night in the privacy of their own sauna. Big grills, little grills, Danish grills, and of course grills dressed up as French maids. We regret any confusion caused by this mispront.

CONFERENCE SIZE 'TOO BIG' claims Blunkett

by Our Education Staff
N.U.T. Case

DAVID BLUNKETT today hit out at what he called "the root cause of so much of the trouble in education today".

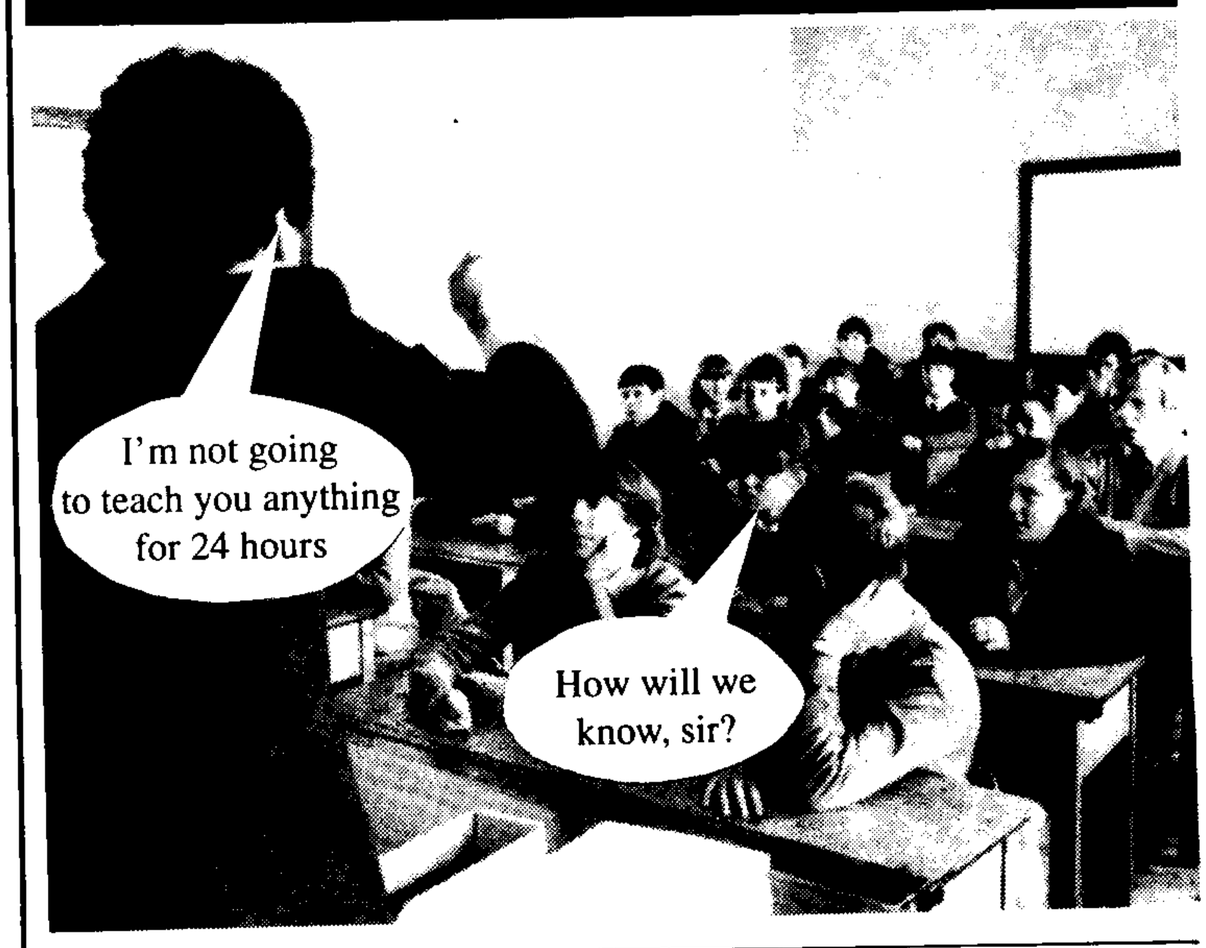
In a controversial speech he claimed that conference sizes were now so big that they could no longer be managed.

"The majority of those in a conference *do* want to sit quietly and listen to me, but you only need a few unruly elements to distract the others and the whole thing is chaos."

Wet Blunkett

The shadow education secretary continued: "The only way for conferences to learn anythging is to cut them down to a manageable size — i.e. two or three people who agree with me."

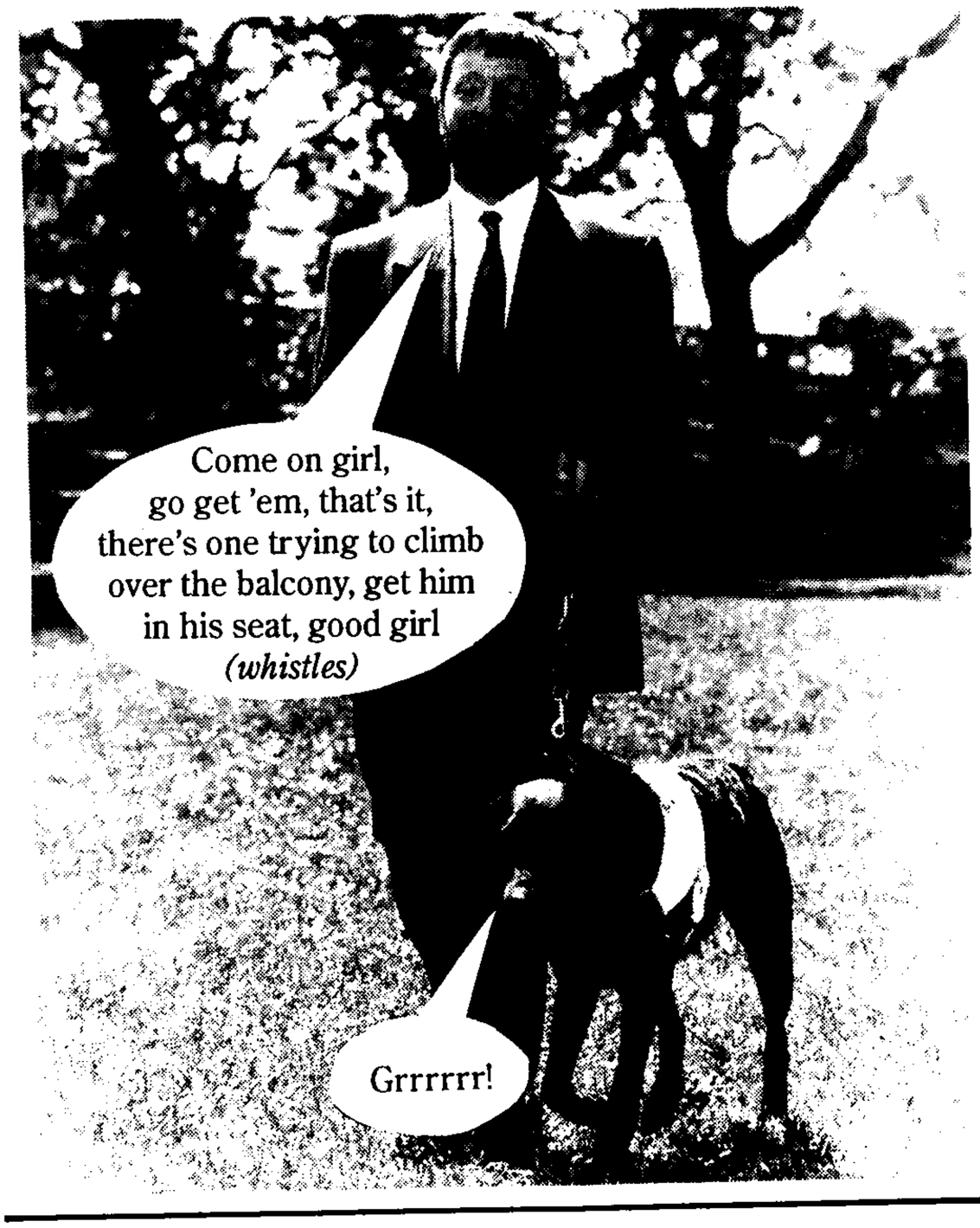
N.U.T. STRIKE THREAT



TV HIGHLIGHTS

ONE MAN AND HIS DOG

This week Dave Blunkett and his trusty Labrador Lucy have to round up the black sheep and get them to go quietly into the NUT conference.



Old Rhymes

Sky in the morning
Still no one watching
(Traditional)

ATTROCIOUS TACKY

(The World's 2nd Worst Columnist)

Aitken is Wonderful

JONATHAN Aitken is head and shoulders above the dirty little lefties on the *Guardian*. I met him camel-racing in Bahrain with my old friend, Prince Ahm-Al-Ite, who was with Russian attache Konrad Kalashnikov and the American Davis Cup finalist J.D. Slazenger. Unlike the greasy little Trots on the *Guardian*, Jonathan has a beautiful wife and daughter, both of whom put inches on this little Greek boy's column (geddit?). Insiders (Jonathan Aitken) tell me that Jonathan will be the next Prime Minister. So watch out leftie scum because he'll kill you when he gets in.

Streisand Makes Me Sick

BARBRA Streisand makes me sick. She can't sing and she makes me sick. She couldn't even play tennis for Greece, like I did. I met her once in 1970 in Sniffer's Club on 78th and 94th in the Big Bagel. She was surrounded by a lot of creeps like Rad Zaldeberg, Morty Schwarzlutz, and Marion Pimms, ex-wife of perfume tycoon Milmot Pimms. *(Who are these people? Ed.)*

And you know what the non-tennis-playing Jewish Princess said to the poor little Greek boy? No?

"No thank you, Mr Taki, I do not do cocaine, but I'm sure you will find a buyer amongst your rather disgusting friends."

What a loser. No wonder she makes me sick! She never even played judo for Greece. Get a life, Barbra!

NEXT WEEK: Taki on Jonathan Aitken and Barbra Streisand.

NEW CD OFFER!

GUNS AND DOLLS

STARRING JONATHAN AITKEN

HIT SONGS INCLUDE:
ALI, GET YOUR GUN (FROM ME)
SUING IN THE RAIN
PUTTING OUT THE WRITS
STAYING IN THE RITZ
SAUDI PACIFIC
I'M GOING TO WASH THAT MAN RIGHT OUT OF THE TORY PARTY
(THAT'S ENOUGH SONGS. ED)

Reprinted from *The New Yorker*

WOEBEGONE DAYS

by GARRISON KEILLOR

IT'S been a noisy week here at the *New Yorker*. Last Monday morning I myself had the temerity to launch an attack on our esteemed editress, Mrs Evans, or as she prefers to be called in her working environment Miss Tina Brown (Lord alone knows why but, being English, I guess she has her own ways of doing things). Some folks do, especially those who come from England which is where she comes from, as does her husband with whom I have no quarrel. Not as yet leastways.

Well, my little letter in which I called her "a talentless bitch" certainly put the proverbial cat among the woodchucks.

Miss Brown, normally as cool and calm as a cucumber in Mrs Smorgasbord's cucumber-patch, could scarce contain her ire. No sirree. There was one lady looking like a racoon in a salt-box.

Come Tuesday morning what do I find on the front page of my daily newspaper? "Garrison needs a rabies shot — says *New Yorker* Editor."

Then I go on to read that I was once an *enfant terrible* and now I'm a hasbeen.

Well let me tell you this. Whatever Miss Brown thinks, the boys in the bar will tell you different.

Take old man Toksvig, who used to do cartoons for editor Willie Shawn when he wasn't running his feed-store. He says:

"Yup! Magazine no goddam good since that Mrs Evans done took it over. It's gone to the coyotes."

And he can say a lot more too when he chooses. But he doesn't need to.

No one buys the magazine now. Not the folks that count don't. *(Continues for 94 pages in similar vein)*

TORIES HIT OUT AT LABOUR'S NEW AGENDA

by Our Political Staff
Michael Whitespacetofill

TOP Tories furiously attacked the recent set of proposals laid out by Labour Leader Tony Blair.

"Labour have simply stolen all these so-called new ideas from us," said Tory Chairman Jeremy Hanley, "and they just won't work. We should know," he continued. "They are all very well in theory but in practice they would be a complete disaster. Policies such as tax cuts, education reform and privatisation may seem attractive in the short term, they may win elections, but let me assure you that in the long-term they turn out to be catastrophic balls-ups on a scale he cannot even imagine."

He concluded: "A vote for Labour is tantamount to a vote for the Conservatives. And you know that's a terrible mistake."

FAN TOLD 'STAY AWAY' BY KNACKER

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man With The Black Armband And The Dime Bar

THE SOCCER world was silent last night following the tragic news that a Neasden fan, Sid Bonkers, had been run over by another Neasden fan, Doris Bonkers, following a fracas at the Boston Arms.

Eyewitnesses told how the violence flared after 58-year-old Sid maintained that Neasden striker Eddie Depardieu should have been strung up from the crossbar on the grounds that it was the only language he understood, apart from French.

Early Bloodbath

But his wife Doris had argued all night that Depardieu was being made a scapegoat and that her husband Sid was the one who should be strung up.

Said Inspector Knacker: "It is not entirely clear to us what transpired at this juncture but at the present time we believe that Mr Bonkers was run over by his wife in their 1963 Hillman Manx.

"As a mark of respect, we are appealing to all Neasden fans (Doris Bonkers) to stay away from the replay."

He added: "It will not be worth going to anyway, because Neasden will lose."

RESULT

Dollis Hill	3
(Nightingale O, Spring R, Holmes C)	
Neasden FC	0

THE MEMOIRS OF JOHN COLE

Serialised exclusively in Private Eye

CHAPTER ONE

THE THOTCHER YEARS

Hondootedly Mossis Thotcher chilliconcarne ambrosiacreamrice sunblockfactor twentyseven Sea Change In Brutush Politics panis angelicus nissan toyota Moster Edward Heath monteverdi bellisarius chiaroscuro lesterpiggott sunflower margerine Bockbenchers' Revolt pierodellafrancesca tetleybitter budleigh salterton tasmania Falklands Factor tuttifrutti bananarama shiboom shiboom Cat Among The Pigeons. Moster Francis Pym guiseppe verdi benetton pergolese stabat mater catamaran Arthur Scargill limpopo lynbarber butheleizi. Red Faces In Wostminster hondetoit andante con moto pollyputthekettleon Moster Norman Tobbit Cat Among The Pigeons Again *(continued for rest of book)*.

TOMORROW: The Cat Among The Pigeons

● ***A Neasden FA Cup Special fanzine is on sale from the end of April***

SHOULD BOTTS BE CLOSED DOWN?

by Our Medical Staff
Dr Harley Street-Porter

THE long-running row continued yesterday over the possible closure of one of London's least loved institutions, St Virginia — or Botts, as she is known.

Experts are agreed that the best course of action would be to take Botts out of action completely at once.

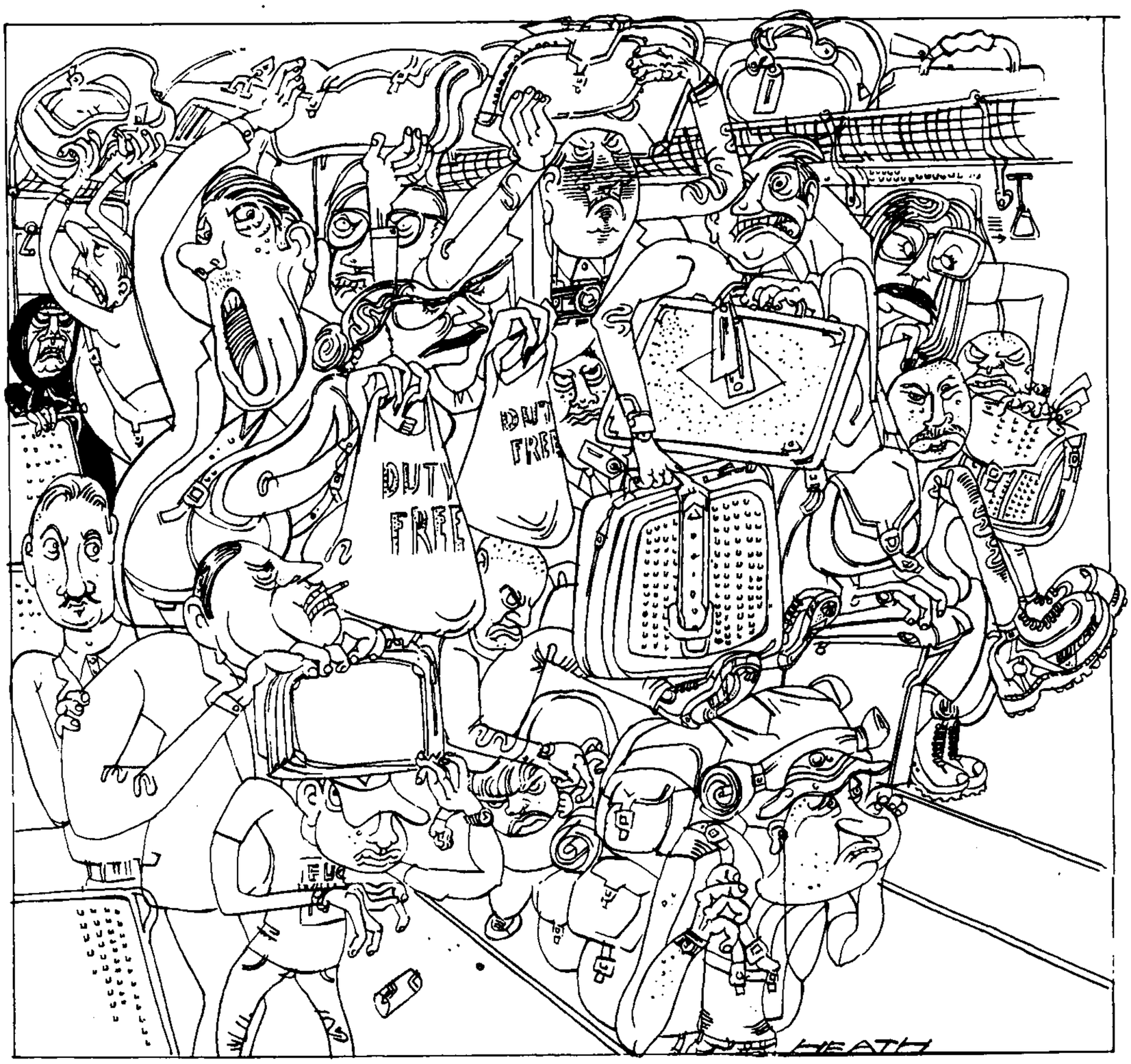
"She does not answer any of the needs of the community," they claimed, "and anything she does could be easily done more efficiently by someone else."

But speaking in defence of Botts, her husband Mr Peter Bottomley said: "My wife is hated by everybody. Generations of medical men owe their coronaries to her. You cannot just shut up my wife just because she is useless. She is a national treasure that the country cannot afford *(shurely 'afford to lose'? Ed)*."

Botts is 44.

9.50 Natural Born Killers Special: Eric Cantona

TV Observer



Great Bores Of Today.

"... did you see the final episode? it was ridiculous with the couple going off in a balloon like that totally unbelievable no one in real life gets so worked up over a choir honestly although the little boy singing 'Panis Angelicus' was rather good and Jane Asher's always good value but the rest of it was ludicrous I've never heard such absurd dialogue and as for the lesbian one you know the Sunday special well that was just laughable people don't behave like that it's just made up to get the viewers in though the village looked wonderful it's somewhere near Henley we're thinking of going there for a weekend and having a look round where they filmed it the countryside is wonderfully unspoilt the lesbian scene was ridiculous though even sillier than *The Rector's Wife* I expect her father you know the real Trollope will be turning in his grave because her books are even worse I've read them all *The Spanish Lover A Passionate Man* and the others she's got a new one out now I expect that'll end up on television as well I just don't see the appeal of it did you miss it? I've got it on tape you can see for yourself how stupid it is I mean that lesbian scene..."

7,15,22... DAMN..
OH DEAR!
SUNDAY
EVERY SUNDAY MORNING HE GOES THROUGH THE SAME SILLY RITUAL TO SEE IF HE'S BEEN LUCKY OR NOT.
BLAST.
SUNDAY
IT'S PATHETIC IF YOU ASK ME.
A PERSON OF GARY'S WEALTH CHECKING IF HE'S WON THE NATIONAL LOTTERY?
SUNDAY
NO. GARY TOTTING UP THE COLUMN INCHES HE'S GOT IN THE TABLOIDS AND SUPPLEMENTS.
OH WELL. BETTER LUCK NEXT WEEK.

Lines To Commemorate The Historic Decision By The Controller Of BBC2 To Discontinue *The Late Show*

'Twas in the year nineteen hundred and ninety five,
That Mr Michael Jackson decided the Late Show could
no longer survive,
He was the Controller of BBC2,
And he decided that this unexpected move was the only
thing he could do.

No more in the title sequence would the wolf howl at the
moon —
A sign for the majority of viewers that they would be
going to sleep soon,
When they heard what was to be the cultural bill of fayre,
All across the nation they would at once to their
beds repair.

Typical of such a night's viewing would be
A discussion of a new Korean Expressionist movie,
Or perhaps a naked dance troupe from the USA,
Or maybe from the Royal Court Upstairs a
controversial new play.

Music lovers too would always get their fill
Of the Country and Western singers frae bonny
Nashville.
Typical of their southern rural art,
Would be a 20-minute version of "Your Cheatin' Heart".

For those who are to the visual arts inclined,
There would be reviews of De Kooning and Yves Klein,
And for those who like a good book on their shelf,
There would be lengthy profiles of serious authors
like Will Self.
And most of all surely as this landmark passes,
We will remember the presenter with the
extraordinary glasses,
Sarah Dunant was this seminal figure
(Who evoked from the philistines at *Private Eye*
the occasional snigger).

But who can forget her animated diction
Or her grasp of contemporary Portuguese fiction?
She was but the first of many a bright star,
And one thinks immediately of young Waldermar
(His surname I'm afraid I cannot recall.
At 11.20 at night one is far from on the ball).

Then there was a Scottish lass tall and proud,
And her name I think was Kirsty McLeod,
Or was it possibly not that but Tracy Wark?
I'm not sure, but she was not the bearded fellow
called Mark.

He regularly appeared with an Irishman
called Tom Paulin,
Who no doubt contributed to the fact that the figures
were falling.
But so it was until the fateful day,
When the hard-pressed Controller had his final say.

"We may consider it the flagship of BBC Arts,
But research shows that the viewers think it's a bunch
of pretentious farts."

© William Rees-McGonagal

TV SHOW TOLD TO 'CLEAN UP ITS ACT'

by Our TV Staff **Garry Bullshit**

THE long-running TV "entertainment" ***Blonde Date,*** **which stars members of the House of Commons, has been told by the regulatory bodies to stop "its relentless stream of sleaze, innuendo and smut".**

"The nation does not want to watch this kind of thing," said the report. "It is not the sort of family viewing that we were promised when the Conservatives got the franchise."

A Nightingale Sang In Wapping

Recent episodes have featured a young woman called Odette having to choose between two possible men and then going to bed with both of them. A week later she came back and told everyone how she got on in detail that the report concluded was "disgusting, lurid, shocking and utterly compelling".

In other episodes a number of middle-aged MPs have been seen trying to pick up young women with absurd one-liners like: "I will leave my wife", "I can get you a job as a researcher", and "I fancy Michael Portillo myself."

A spokesman for the show however defended its style and said:

Three-Line Quip

"It's all harmless fun. And let's face it, the whole point of the show is to get Tory MPs to run off with various women.

"Everyone enjoys it and it's all a good laugh for the viewers."

Cilla Black is 79.

A Taxi Driver writes

Each week a well-known cabbie is invited to comment on an issue of topical importance.

This week: **Dave Dibbs** (cab no. 724364) on the Electrocution of Nicholas Ingram

■ Those Americans guv, they're bleedin' barbarians. Blimey! Keeping a bloke waitin' for 12 years and then fryin' 'im live in an electric chair. I mean, they send 200,000 volts straight through your system and your eyes pop out, your brain boils, and it's ages before you're even dead! I don't want to even think about it! They have to shave all your arms an' that, put that gel stuff on you so the electricity goes right in you, and they put a thing on your head and the chair's right next to where you spend your final hours. It's sickenin'! I mean, it's inhuman! It's barbaric.

You know what they should do to people like Ingram? String 'im up! It's the only language he understands.

I 'ad that Pierrepoint in the back of the cab once. A real gentleman...

NEXT WEEK: Jim Le Fanu (cab no. 127118) on the implications of London's proposed hospital reorganisation.

"Please help me. I've just witnessed a horrible, brutal murder and I don't know how to make a claim for post-traumatic stress disorder compensation"

Lives Of The Saints Number 94

St Jonathan of Aitken

IN THOSE days there came to pass a terrible plague of sleaze, and it filled the land like an evil cancer. And all good people were shocked and dismayed at the way monstrous creatures roamed at will, spreading the pestilence far and wide.

And all respect for the rulers was lost as the poisonous vermin and reptiles undermined the fabric of the nation.

But, lo, there rose up at last a champion to fight the sleaze dragons. St Jonathan was a rich young noble who had spent his days in the country of Arslikhan, helping the rich and ignoring the poor.

"Good people!" he cried. "Enough is enough! I will undertake to rid the nation of these hideous monsters!" So the saintly figure proclaimed, boldly reading from his autocue.

Then he set forth with his trusty writ in one hand, and a wallet full of Arab money in the other.

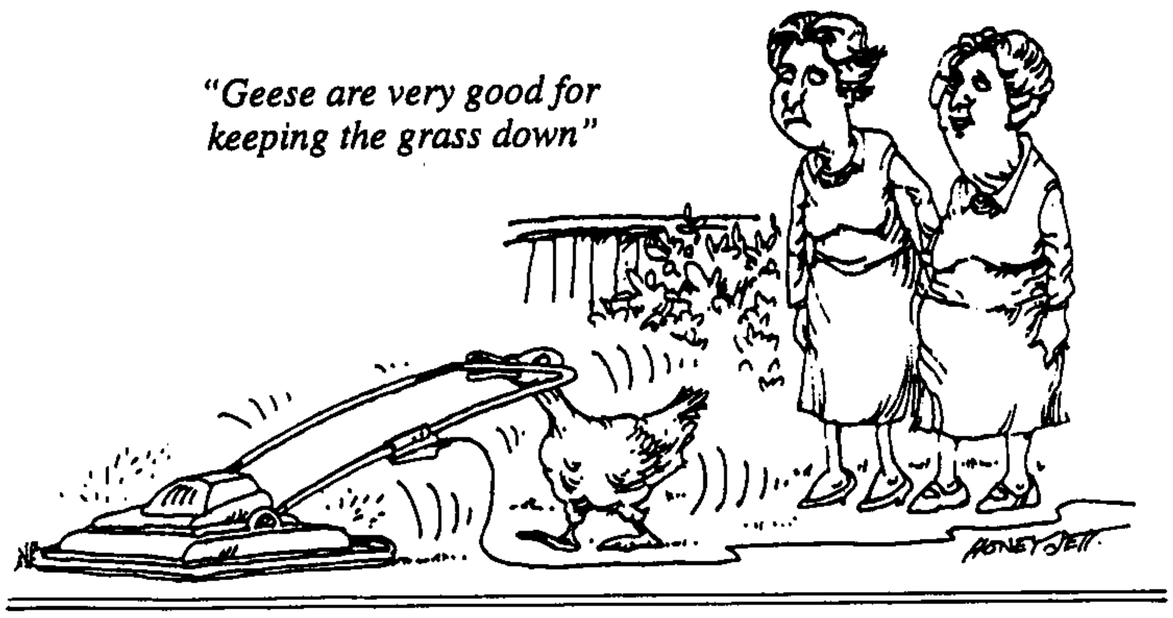
But sadly he was surrounded by evil hacks and forced to resign.

© The Society for the Promotion of Conservative Knowledge.

YOUR CUT OUT 'N' KEEP GUIDE

HOW THE NEW ECU WILL LOOK

"Geese are very good for keeping the grass down"



LOTTERY LOSER TO SUE

by Our Legal Staff
TV's Joshua Rozenbeard

A 42-year-old milkman from Newport Pagnell is to sue the Heritage Minister, alleging "traumatic stress disorder" following his failure to win last week's £27 million National Lottery jackpot.

Said father of three Phil Float, who asked to remain anonymous: "I could not believe it when the numbers came up and mine were nothing like them.

"Ever since then my life has been a misery. I cannot sleep and I cannot concentrate on anything for more than a few minutes."

Instant Whinge

Mr Float claimed that he could no longer deliver milk to the correct houses and had been threatened with the sack by his employers, Pagnell Milk Services plc ("We Deliver. You drink.").

Mr Float is asking for compensation in the region of £27 million.

"The Government must step in and give me a lot of money for nothing."

OLD DOG REPRIEVED SHOCK

THE EUROPEAN Court today granted an 11th hour reprieve to the 54-year-old Complete Bull Terrier, known as "Dempstey", after its owner Lord Rothermere proved that "it did not represent a threat to anyone".

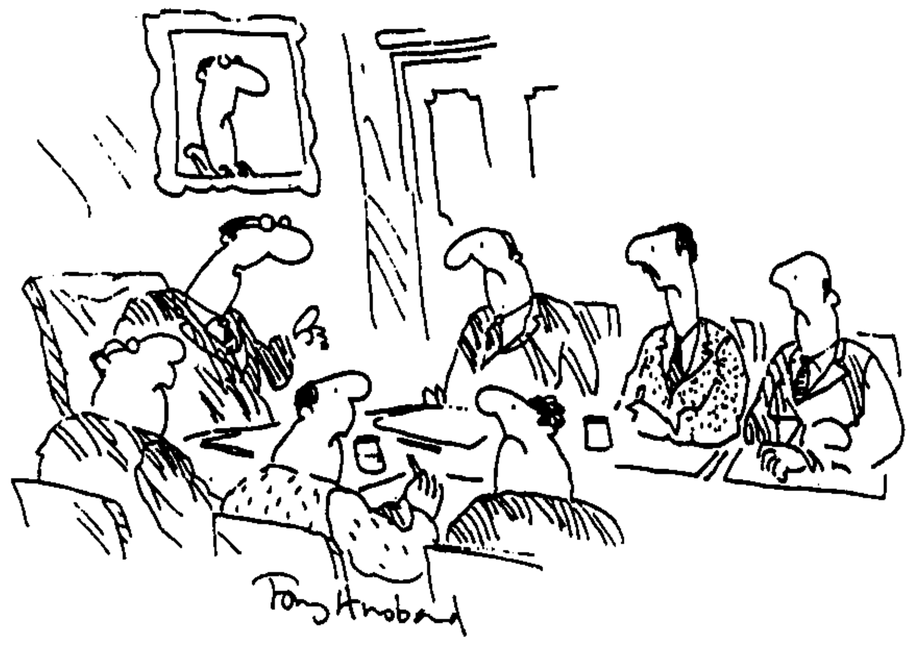
A tearful Lord Rothermere had been told to put Dempstey down on the grounds that he might attack an unknown actress or a very obscure member of the Royal Family.

Lap Dog

"My Dempstey is not like that," said Rothermere. "He has no teeth at all and anyway he is always kept muzzled. He would not harm a fly. I take him everywhere I go and all my friends love old Dempstey. When he sees my rich mates he wags his tail and then licks their arses in an affectionate manner.

"He is not a dangerous Bull Terrier as he has been telling everyone. He is a pet poodle."

Ivana Trump is grateful.



"Gentlemen, I've seen the future and it's snowboarding..."

DIARY

TONY BENN MP

Tuesday April 13th, 1995. Let's keep personalities out of it. Let's stick to the issues. That's been the abiding belief of my political life these past fifty-five years, and I intend to stick to it in this diary. Harold wouldn't have agreed with keeping personalities out of it, of course. Oh no, not Harold. Though it's on record that I always found him on a personal basis a very nice man, Harold was always ruthless in his dealings with his ministers, and often two-faced and deceitful, stubborn, unprincipled and frankly on a personal basis rather unpleasant.

And what of this new chap, Blair? John tells me that Roy told him that Brian once heard from Rodney that this new fellow Campbell was rumoured to have told Margaret Beckett that Bill thought John's view of Blair was something completely unprintable. I also have it on very good authority — from Jim via Jack through Bernie, who heard it from someone in the T&G at last year's Conference — that Blair prefers personalities and what I call tittle-tattle to the cut-and-thrust of democratic debate.

Wednesday April 14th, 1995. Funny, isn't it, the way the Establishment, through the press barons of the multinational media, in conjunction with their foreign paymasters, is still dead set on undermining me, personally and politically, by making me out to be somehow "paranoid"? What absolute tosh they talk — as though I'm some sort of mad-eyed "conspiracy theorist"!!! But this is all part of a closely-orchestrated capitalist campaign to destroy me, and through me the political will of the British people. It serves the Establishment's political and commercial interests, doesn't it, to make me out as some sort of "obsessive" character! Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, as the archive of tape-recordings, memos, diaries, notes, letters, speeches and draft amendments I have stored away these past fifty-five years make absolutely crystal clear.

Thursday April 15th 1995. It happened again this morning. I had just finished tape-recording myself for the archives, swallowing my third mug of tea and finishing off a banana fruit when the newspapers — many of them still delivered by workers to the private homes of millionaires, even in this day and age! — were delivered to my home. What, I wondered, are the latest press comments about me and the democratic policies I have been fighting for tooth and nail these past fifty years? I read every page of the *Daily Express*, including sports and arts, into the tape recorder, but, on my playback, failed to hear a single mention of myself and my policies.

It's their new strategy, y'see. Having in the past sought to undermine democracy by lampooning me they now try to achieve the same result by ignoring me, making me out to be some sort of "fringe" character!

Poured myself another cup of tea. The tape-recorder picked up all the glugs, so it obviously doesn't need new batteries quite yet.

Friday April 16th, 1995. Have found a way of knotting my necktie using an extraordinary little gadget on my Swiss Army penknife. Its recommended use in the accompanying pamphlet is for taking the stones out of horses' hooves, but they keep these other uses quiet, don't they, just in case the ordinary decent people get to hear of them. Whereas tying me necktie used to take, ooh, a minute, with this handy gadget it can now take over 15 minutes. I can't recommend it enough. Of course, the minute word gets out about it, it'll be dynamite, and there'll be the most massive international cover-up involving all the powers the state has at its disposal. But that's what you'd expect of the feudal hierarchy under which we are forced to live, isn't it? Either that, or they make one out to be potty!

Unpeel a banana and eat it, first throwing away the mushy white bit inside.

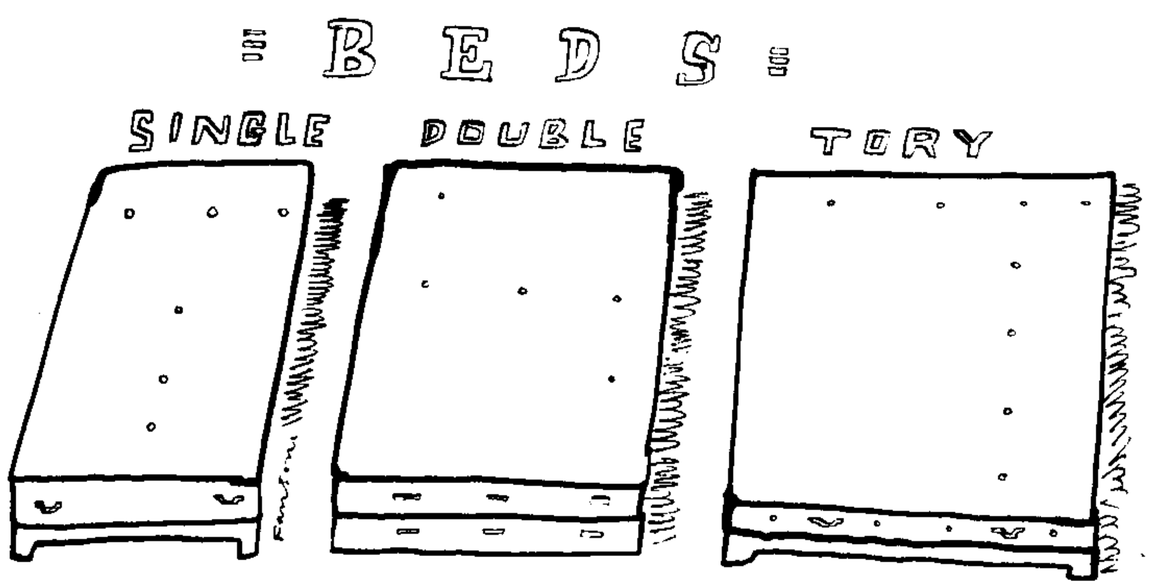
Saturday April 17th, 1995. I have two tape-recorders, one newer and more capable, the other older and rather more experienced. For security reasons, I don't often leave them in a room together, but I have often wondered how they behave when they are alone. So simply by way of experiment, I placed the two of them together in my office having first — quite unknown to them — placed a third tape-recorder in an upper drawer of my desk with the "Record" button pressed on.

The results are fascinating. For three hours, not a single murmur from either of them. Or were they tipped off by the third tape-recorder, as a result of some sort of nod-and-wink from the powers that be? I'll investigate further next week. A fourth tape-recorder may well be needed.

Sunday April 18th, 1995. Whatever faults I may have as a politician, if any, I can honestly say that throughout the course of my political life, I have been a man of the strongest principle. That's something not even my closest political allies would wish to contradict. Let's not beat about the bush. The strength of my principles is such that, time and time again, I came very close to resigning from the Callaghan government. For instance, I bitterly disagreed with Jim and the rest of the Cabinet over incomes policy, defence, Europe, Northern Ireland and crawling cap-in-hand to the IMF. I frequently said: "Frankly Jim, I'm not going to take it any more, my principles won't let me. I have no choice but to resign". But — and this I may say is typical Jim — he always managed to avoid being in the room whenever I made these threats.

But at least one of us maintained his principles to the end. Speaking as the British people, I am proud to have emerged from five years of Labour Government with my conscience intact. It meant that I could roundly rebuke those of my fellow Ministers who meekly gave way on these vital public issues, shamefully hanging on to political office at any cost. I had no time for such hypocrisy.

Monday April 19th 1995. Interesting, isn't it, the way it's now all Blair, Blair, Blair. The media are building him up as some sort of future leader of the Labour Party, trying to isolate myself and the broad mass of the working people of this country from the source of real democratic power. But I have faith in the British people. I have absolute trust in the ballot box, just so long as the right people are called on to vote. From the historic perspective, I am convinced that it can't be long before the workers secure for themselves the common ownership of the means of prod prod prod prod prod. Blow me down, something wrong with the old tape-recorder. Best leave it to soak overnight in water, and resume recording tomorrow.



Mellor calls for more humps

Borough News

Enforcement action has been recommended for an unlawful erection at the Scout Hall, Scout Lane, off Clapham Pld Town, SW4.

Vauxhall View

Literary Review

Poetry in Mo...

Spring Fiction

THE debate about the health of the English novel has been going on for a while now.

On one side of the table stand a gaggle of Jeremiahs — many of whom, curiously, have not so far vouchsafed the public with any works of their own genius — grimly maintaining that the contents of our bookshops are sad, debauched animals creeping along in the shadow of mighty forebears.

On the other we have the cheer-up merchants, the Bradbury boys, who think that Mart, Ish, Julian, Salman and the others are just the dandiest talents on the block. All rather academic, as nobody actually buys the stuff, and luxuriantly hyped Mart will be lucky to sell 50,000 of *The Information*.

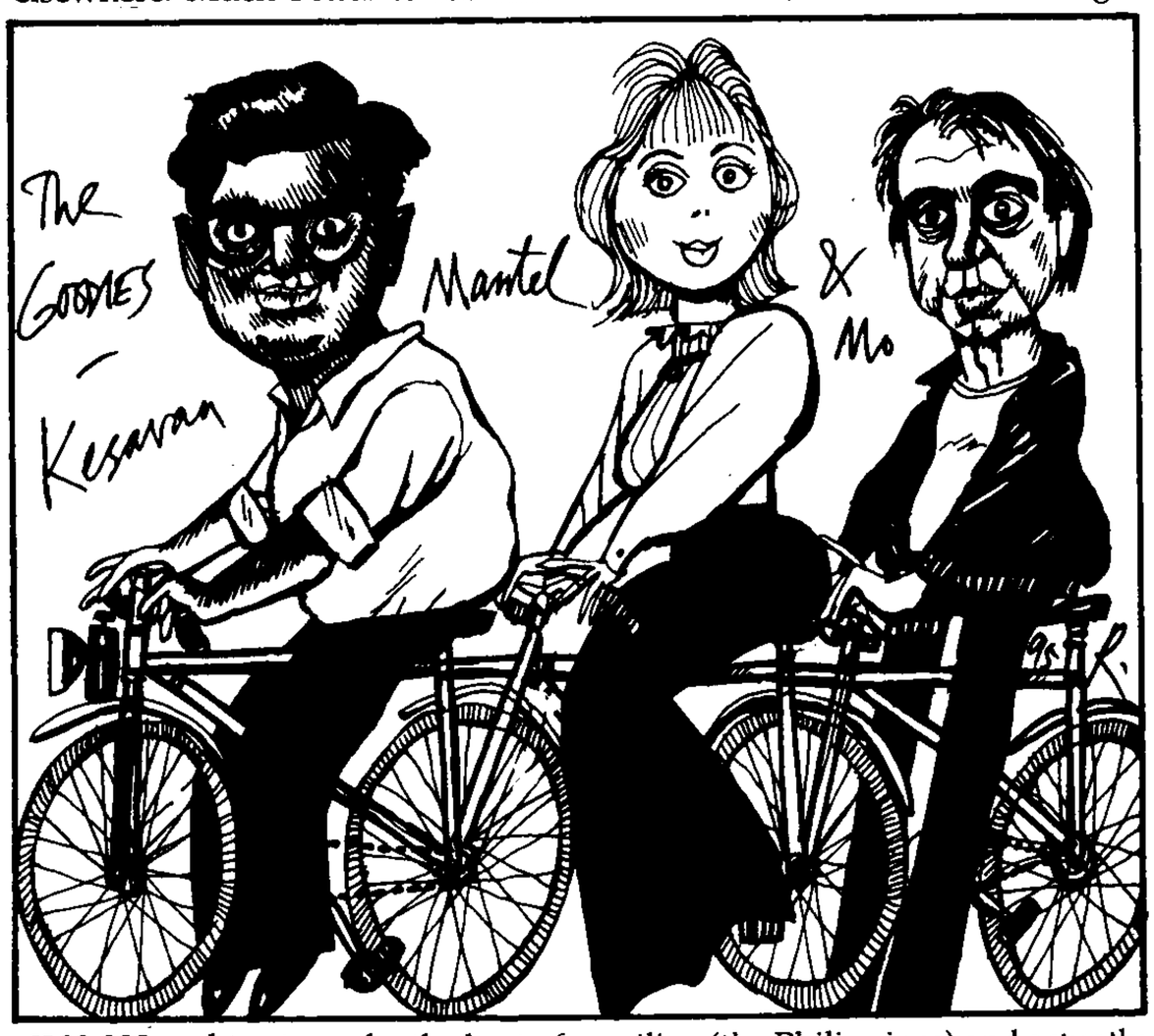
Sales aside — and who in literary publishing is worried about *sales*? — the everything-in-the-library is lovely line is unlikely to be helped by this year's spring highlights, currently being ramped into the arts pages by gangs of respectful publicists — dozens of big, fat, serious books by big, fat, serious novelists, and clinkers every one.

We all know about Mart — 450 of self-absorption, you've seen this already, repetition and preening; we all know about Hanif — repeat the not very appetising mixture as before — but at this moment book reviewers all over the home counties are bracing themselves to tackle Adam Thorpe's *Still* (Secker, £15.99), 583 pages of a movieman's century-long memoirs (territory already staked out by William Boyd's *The New Confessions*) done in larky "voices".

Real masochists, though, might prefer to wait for Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled* (Faber, £15.99), a baffling 200,000-word opus about a musician who, turning up in a central European town, encounters a collection of eccentrics whose delight it is to regale him with five-page monologues as they follow him into lifts and cinemas and on walks around the Kafkaesque locale.

And these, heaven help us, are only the kids; the callow under-50s. Over the hill, though, in the arid hinterlands staked out by the bookclubs and the middle-market tabloids, older contenders are lining up. David Lodge (yawn). Michael Palin's *Hemingway's Chair* (zzzz). Why are they so bad? Why can't these boys shape up? There are several explanations for the inability of our finest and dandiest to put pen to paper in even a reasonably convincing way. One of them is commercial, which is a polite way of summarising the claims of money, reputation and fear by which the modern publishing process is conducted.

Picture the directors of Faber & Faber as they gloomily contemplate the manuscript of *The Unconsoled*. How to tell Ish (who, after all, won the Booker for *The Remains Of The Day*) that he's written a stinker? His agent might get cross; he might go elsewhere. Much better to lob him



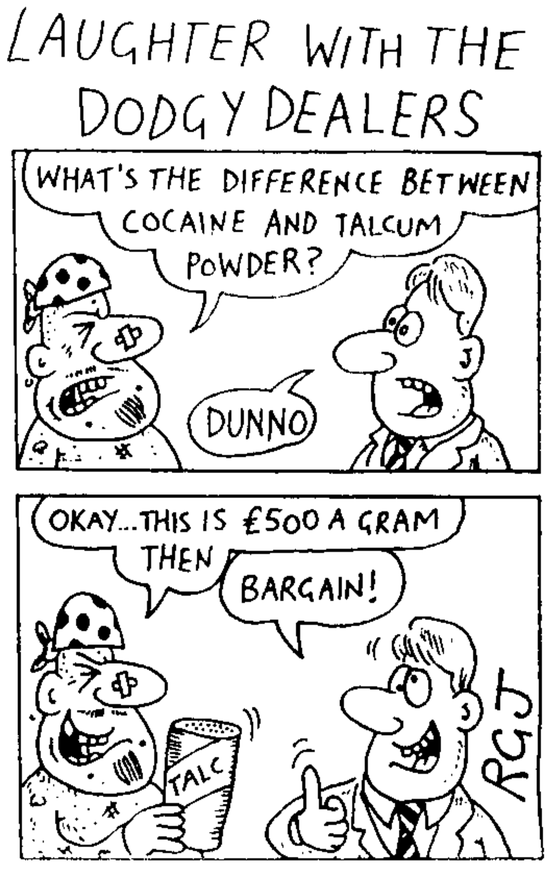
£300,000 and try to make the best of a very bad job. (The jacket of *The Unconsoled* advertises it as "a sad, strange comedy", which actually seems a little too near the mark.)

But another explanation — certainly one that covers the Marts and the Adams — is procedural. This is that post-modernism, the dominant strain in English writing for around a decade and a half, is simply washed up. Post-modernism? The thing about post-modernism was its apparent ability to contend with the chaos of the modern world. We can't write like Dickens, Mart and Co. shrieked, not unreasonably — it's all too complicated, all too unguessable. Away went the formal straitjackets of "realism", "satire", "comedy" and so on, and in their place came a bran-tub eclecticism — in other words, using what you liked, how you liked, as long as it seemed appropriate. All of which would have been just fine, had it not encouraged everyone to fuck about. The consequences are there on the shelves. *The Information*, for example, is a decent 50 page "realist" novella ruined by cleverness, just as within the world-ending weightiness of *London Fields* there lurked a quite funny novel about darts.

The good stuff being written at the moment, consequently, isn't by Mart and the lads. It tends to come from more modest practitioners who find a small patch of life that is their own and start cultivating it. One of the best books published this Spring, as it happens, is Timothy Mo's *Brownout On Breadfruit Boulevard* (Paddleless Press, £13.99), a fine satirical tale, confined to a single milieu (the Philippines) and actually about a set of characters rather than the brilliance of its author.

Mo, by the way, is a victim of the Amis syndrome in reverse: refused the wantonly large sum of money he imagined the book was worth, our author ended up publishing it himself. There is a moral here somewhere.

Meanwhile, the puzzled booklover should forget Mart, Ish and Adam and the rest of these



maximally hyped disasters, and check out Mo, Hilary Mantel's *An Experiment In Love* (Viking, £15) and — a brilliant first novel that hardly anyone reviewed — Mukul Kesavan's *Looking Through Glass* (Chatto, £14.99). Each supplies not only an intriguing story and a believable cast, but the absolutely priceless advantage of an author who disdains to show off.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ *WHILE Sunset Times editor John Witherow ponders who should succeed Harry Ritchie as the paper's books editor, the Eye can give a sneak preview of the sort of criteria which will determine his final choice.*

The shortlist includes Christopher Hudson, novelist and former Evening Standard leader-writer, and Toby "Toyboy" Young, editor of the execrable Modern Review, who is being much promoted for the post by his old patroness Sue Douglas, the paper's deputy editor.

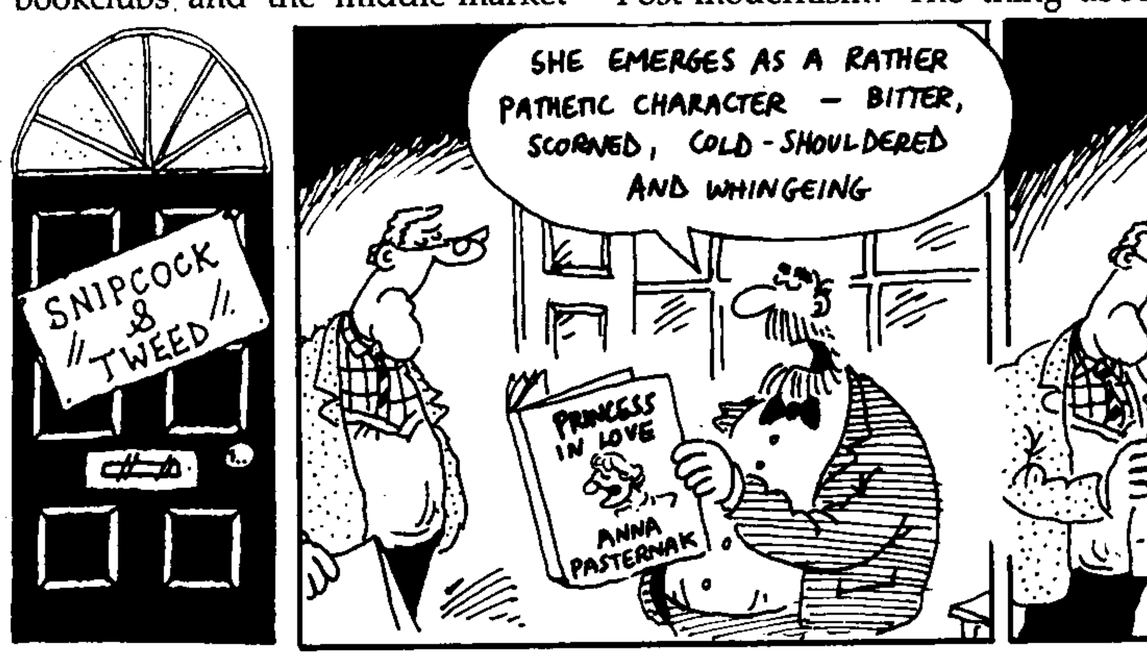
Years ago a tired and emotional Young fell asleep during discussions with Douglas of the Ugandan oral tradition: he awoke to find her raining blows down on his head. This wasn't mentioned in his job interview the other day with Witherow, but Young was asked whether he read many books. "I'm not exactly bookish," he sheepishly explained. "Jolly good," said the editor of the ST. "Neither am I."

☐ EXCITED crowds formed at a book-signing for Martin Amis's latest masterpiece, *The Information*.

One awestruck man asked if Mr Amis could possibly write "To George" on his book before making his signature. The Great One gave the man a withering look and said: "No I won't. There are 200 people waiting here and I just don't have time."

There's generosity for you.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
SHE EMERGES AS A RATHER PATHETIC CHARACTER — BITTER, SCORNED, COLD-SHOULDERED AND WHINGEING
PRINCESS IN LOVE
ANNA PASTERNAK
AND DIANA'S NOT MUCH BETTER
STYLE
ANNA PASTERNAK - WHY I HATE BLOOMSBURY

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *No Exit* by Julie Burchill.

THE HYPE: Random House paid £175,000 for Burchill's first two novels: the fuck 'n' shop classic *Ambition*, and the second bestseller-to-be, *No Exit*.

THE PRICE: *No Exit* now cowers on a reduced shelf in the Book Warehouse, Piccadilly — down from a pretentious £12.99 to a more realistic £1.99.

footnotes

THE LADY VARNISHES

MANY and magnificent were the representatives of the democratic west who were welcomed this month at a glamorous conference at the Royal Meridian Hotel, Bahrain.

They included Les Aspin, former defence secretary of the democratic United States of America; Claude Cheysson, former foreign minister of democratic France; F.W. de Klerk, deputy president of democratic South Africa; and Kurt Waldheim, former president of democratic Austria (and not so democratic former scourge of Yugoslav Jews). But by far the most glittering jewel in this crown was the guest of honour, Margaret Thatcher OM PC FRS, former prime minister of Britain.

The three-day conference (10-12 April) was convened by the Gulf Economic Forum which is financed almost entirely by the government of Bahrain. Its title was *The New Agenda for Finance in the Middle East*. Sadly the headlines from Bahrain on all three conference days were stolen by reports of explosions and fires, all of them caused by the determination of the amir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Khalifa, to stamp out opposition to his government: a task which is becoming increasingly difficult as the opposition gets the support of more and more of the 500,000 Bahraini population.

THE LADY AND THE SHEIKH: Thatcher and Khalifa

The main demand of the opposition must strike a chord with Aspin, Cheysson, Thatcher et al: it is for a constitution and an elected parliament, both of which were abolished by decree of the amir 20 years ago.

There are now estimated to be at least 2,000 political prisoners in Bahrain, and the past few weeks have seen a series of arrests of prominent opposition leaders in their homes. The university was closed in the exam period. Sheikh Al Jamri, who signed a grovelling petition to the amir begging for talks about a constitution, is under house arrest. New detention camps are being set up not 10 kilometres from the Royal Meridian hotel (which is owned by the minister of transport, who is also the son of the prime minister).

Curiously not a single speech at the conference was devoted to the case for the opposition in Bahrain. Lady Thatcher was beseeched by Dr Saeed Al Shehabi, of the Bahraini opposition who is exiled in London, to "advocate democracy and human rights values" while in Bahrain. A reply from Mark Worthington in her office on 6 April drooled: "Lady Thatcher hopes that a peaceful solution can be found to current difficulties and that the whole community will work towards creating a stable and prosperous future for all of Bahrain's people."

Thatcher often cites the "historic ties" which bind Bahrain to Britain. Perhaps the closest such tie is Brigadier Ian Henderson, 73, director-general of public security in Bahrain. Henderson learned his trade with the British army in Kenya where he became famous for obtaining information from rebel prisoners. Chucked out of Kenya by the new independent government in 1964, Henderson was posted first to white Rhodesia and then to Bahrain, a British protectorate. He has been there ever since and is in complete charge of the island's 13,000 police — one for every 40 people. Henderson is said to be a devoted admirer of Margaret Thatcher — a feeling which is, apparently, entirely mutual.

'BIG BUCKS' RIDES AGAIN

■ No one speaks up more eloquently in favour of high pay for top executives than Richard "Big Bucks" Giordano, chairman of British Gas.

Mr Giordano points out that full-time directors' salaries are decided by "remuneration committees" composed almost entirely of part-time "non-executive" directors. No one, he concludes, could possibly accuse executive directors of rewarding themselves.

Mr Giordano is not just chairman of British Gas. He's a non-executive director of a lot of other companies too and spends a good deal of his time serving on their remuneration committees. At Grand Metropolitan PLC he helped to decide the pay of the chairman, Lord Sheppard, who was struggling along on a mere £820,634 in 1993. Thanks to Mr Giordano, he got an increase in 1994 of £108,000, bringing him to £928,000. Mr Giordano made sure that the "remuneration" of Grand Met directors went up from £3,568,953 to £4,109,153, an increase about four times higher than the rate of inflation.

Another very important chairman who has every reason to be grateful to Mr Giordano is Sir Derek Birkin of the mining conglomerate Rio Tinto Zinc. Mr Giordano is a director of RTZ and sits on the remuneration committee. In 1993 the committee raised Sir Derek's emoluments from a rather miserable £520,316 to a much more respectable £588,651. Mr Giordano also likes to make sure of financial security in the boardroom of his old company, British Oxygen, where he is sits on the remuneration committee (quaintly known as the management resources committee). Since he re-joined British Oxygen last year, Mr Giordano has excelled himself in boosting the remuneration of his colleagues. Thanks to hefty payments as "underprovision in prior years" for pension contributions (£393,000) and "provision for share incentive scheme" (£2.2m), the total remuneration of executive directors shot up from £5,174,000 in 1993 to £7,365,000 last year.

Until recently "Big Bucks" also served on the remuneration committee of Reuters, which he joined in 1991. One of his greatest achievements there was to double directors' bonuses. They went up from £199,000 in 1991, when Giordano arrived, to £431,000 in 1993, when Giordano left the committee. Big bucks all round.

TWO CHAIRMEN AND THEIR REMUNERATOR: Mr Giordiano, Lord Sheppard and Sir Derek Birkin

THE THINGS THEY SAY

I have seen the future and it works

"Retreating and stagnating have been tried and salutarily failed. The sideways shuffles of those who — in mockery of history and poverty of purpose — like to call themselves Social Democrats offer no means of progress. They neither pacify Labour's enemies nor inspire Labour's friends. And when the shufflers finally take themselves off to stale centrist pastures in boardrooms, the House of Lords or European Commissions in a sort of movable *Any Questions* panel, only the faction watchers in the Lobby and coalition mongers in the City mourn."

Neil Kinnock, writing in the Political Quarterly, Oct – Dec 1980, p411. (He is now European Commissioner for Transport)

Desperately Framing Susan

WHEN Kevin Callan walked free this month from the court of appeal after proving with absolute certainty that he was innocent of the murder for which he was convicted in 1992, he wore a t-shirt inscribed: FRIENDS OF SUSAN MAY.

For many months before his release he had been engaged in a long correspondence with Susan May, who was also in prison for a 1992 murder she insists she did not commit.

The two cases had a lot in common. Both murders took place in Greater Manchester. Both defendants were alleged to have killed someone they loved: Callan was devoted to four-year-old Amanda Allman, and Susan May had tenderly looked after her aged aunt Hilda Marchbank for years before the old lady was suffocated to death in her home.

Both cases were supervised by the same Manchester crown prosecution service (CPS), which relied for vital evidence on local home office pathologists and forensic experts. Almost as soon as he was released, Kevin Callan travelled to Durham jail where he spent the afternoon with Susan May. She told him of a long saga of delays and evasions by the CPS while her London solicitors, Bindmans, try to bring her case to appeal.

1. THE CASE OF THE LOST NOTEBOOK

Susan May resolutely and furiously denied killing her aunt from the moment the suggestion was first put to her. But one alleged statement was used against her. A Det Sgt Rimmer told the trial Susan had mentioned seeing scratches on her aunt's face when she discovered the body. This information, it was alleged, could only have come from the murderer. Susan vigorously denied any such statement. In April last year Bindmans, who had just taken over the case, asked for Rimmer's notebook. Seven months later, in November, the CPS admitted the notebook had been lost.

THREE YEARS FOR NOTHING: Kevin Callan

2. THE CASE OF THE SILENT SUSPECTS

In July last year Bindmans asked for copies of tapes of all police interviews with other suspects. Four and a half months later CPS lawyers finally agreed to supply copies of the tapes — but have still not provided the crucial ones.

3. THE CASE OF THE VANISHING BLOODSTAIN

At her trial the judge constantly repeated that the "main plank" of the case against Susan May was fingerprint evidence. A print of hers was found on the wall opposite her aunt's deathbed, and there were two other marks near it.

The prosecution claimed that all three marks were Susan's and that they were stained with the blood of the dead woman. Susan was not surprised that her fingerprints were on the wall — "my fingerprints are all over the house" she says. The crucial question was: were any of her prints stained with her aunt's blood?" One prosecution expert testified that one of the prints appeared to contain blood — but could not say for sure whether it was human blood, and certainly could not tell whose blood it was.

If there was no blood on the prints, or if the blood was not Hilda Marchbank's, the entire case against Susan May collapses. Her solicitors have been demanding for nearly a year that the stains should be tested by new technology in Germany.

The Manchester CPS started by pretending that samples were not taken from two of the stains. "They were simply photographed," said a CPS letter on 25 April last year. Not until October, six months later, did the CPS finally agree that, er, whoops, yes samples *were* taken from all three stains. In December, it finally apologised for its howler.

Meanwhile a long argument raged about where and how new tests should be carried out. Susan's solicitors insisted that there should be no tests until both sides had agreed on the time and place.

The CPS nevertheless went ahead with preliminary tests without the defence expert. (The only remarkable result was that one stain which the prosecution had claimed contained human blood did not do so.) Susan's solicitors protested that their requests and agreements had been blatantly ignored. They have not yet had a satisfactory reply.

During all this prevarication and delay, Susan May rots in Durham jail, continually protesting her innocence.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

"All the old rumours and cuttings are dredged up, all the rubbish about arms dealing and the rest of it. Hopefully, you will make a mistake and then we will be able to sue the pants off you".

Sir Tim Bell (knighted by Thatcher), chief PR man for the Thatcher family, in an interview with Russell Miller of the Sunday Times, 26th January 1992.

"Saudi Arabia is a backward feudal country. But it's paradise for doing defence deals, because spare parts have no limits in a country where commissions have no limits".

Mark Thatcher in conversation in April 1987 with oil trader Gary Smith, quoted in the serialisation of Thatcher's Gold by Paul Halloran and Mark Hollingsworth, Mail on Sunday April 9, 1995.

FIRED BY FAYED

■ IF YOU want to read about the rights of foreigners in Britain, you don't normally reach for the London *Evening Standard*.

So it was refreshing to come across a *Standard* editorial last month campaigning for British citizenship for two Egyptians. They are the Fayed brothers, who own Harrods and who once owned the old Barkers building in Kensington which now houses the *Daily Mail* and *Evening Standard*.

In a bitter attack on the home secretary's refusal of citizenship for the brothers the *Standard* complained of "a touch of racism" in the home office and praised the Fayeds who have "contributed millions to the economy and created employment and prosperity".

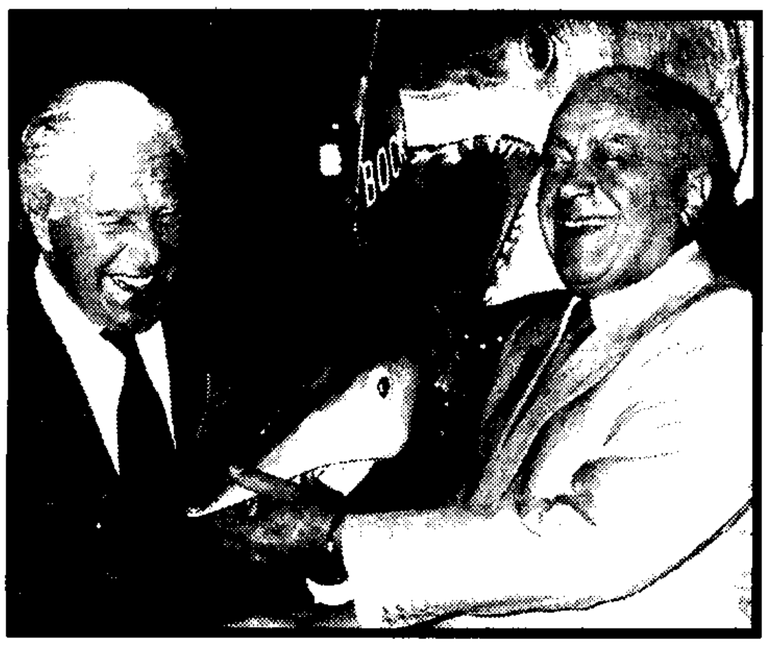
The words "racism and prosperity" astonished officials of the shop workers trade union Usdaw. 25 times in the last seven months the union has won tribunal cases against Harrods on behalf of workers who have been unfairly sacked or victims of racial discrimination.

● Jeremy Comer, who worked for Harrods as a manager for 21 years. He was sacked last year for "gross misconduct": going to the pub at lunchtime. His case was recently settled. Harrods paid a sum he can't disclose. He has not yet found another job.

● Joseph Gable, who worked in Harrods food hall for three and a half years was sacked for "neglect of company policy" when he threw away a box of rotten strawberries. He won £4,500 at a tribunal.

● Ahmed Boudeffeur, who worked as head waiter in Harrods restaurant for four years, was suddenly and unfairly sacked for bad timekeeping. His case was settled to his advantage before it came to a tribunal.

In all 25 cases Harrods paid up — between £2,000 and £6,000. John Fahy, Usdaw's official for Harrods, tells the *Eye*: "There were overtones of racism in many cases. The number of dismissals recently has been extraordinarily high."



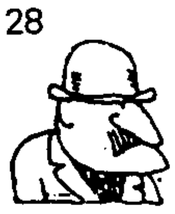
SPOT THE SHARK: Mohamed Fayed

Amory Pokery 2

■ UNFLUSTERED by the snub he received from the NHS Pensions Agency when he circulated national health service pensioners with a blatant advertising puff for private health organisations (see last *Eye*), the paymaster-general, the Hon David Heathcoat-Amory, has struck again.

He is now sending all pensioners from the armed forces another puff — for the British Health Care Association, which represents private health schemes. He encourages pensioners to write to the BHCA in Kettering "for further details". And then he says he will be happy to deduct subscriptions direct from the pensions.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183



In the City

THE sudden decision to delay once again the start of the first Maxwell trial from its supposed fixed date of 18 April seems to have taken everybody by surprise. No reason has been given officially for the delay, nor a new date set.

However, according to one version of events the delay was caused by the sudden discovery of a filing cabinet of Maxwelliana at the Department of Timidity & Inaction which somehow had been overlooked. Such documents should perhaps have been turned over to the Maxwell lawyers long ago.

Just why the DTI (which has on hold the results of its investigation into the flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers) had not turned over these documents is unclear, as are the documents' contents. But it is now suggested that the Maxwells' lawyers' request to examine this latest documentary treasure trove in their relentless pursuit of the truth is behind the delay.

FOR at least one of those intimately concerned with the fate of the Barings' terminator Nick Leeson it may be no bad thing if he is shipped off east to see a few things, such as Changi prison.

The Leeson case officer at the Serious Farce Office (SFO) is James Kellock. He was previously involved in another high profile prosecution: the £40 million Blue Arrow fiasco which saw every defendant acquitted or the charges dropped.

Such a bad experience may not generate great enthusiasm for a return to the arcane world of City suits behaving badly. Especially when Singapore is only too willing to deal with Leeson, and the regulatory authorities here (who everyone, other than the SFO, believes should have handled Blue Arrow) are champing at the bit to ban from the Temple of Mammon everyone at Barings who failed to control Leeson. One more reason it still seems more likely Leeson will be flying east, not west, later this year.

WHILE the Royal Bank of Scotland wrestles with the problems of the Conservative Party's overdraft, it is to be hoped that its rival the Bank of Scotland has no similar worries with party leader-in-waiting Michael Portillo.

Portillo and his wife Carolyn Eadie were recently reported to have sold their newly converted farmhouse home near Aylesbury realising negative equity on their investment of £110,000. The property was acquired in 1988 for an estimated £320,000 with the aid of a mortgage from the Bank of Scotland's London branch in Oxford Street. The bank had a charge on the property to cover certain "further advances", perhaps to top up an earlier mortgage following the sale of their previous home.

Should there still be any monies outstanding, no doubt the Bank of Scotland will be sympathetic to such an esteemed client who has taken such a substantial hit.

THE suggestion by the desperate *Mail on Sunday* in serialising the publishing damp squib of the year, *Thatcher's Gold*, that Mark Thatcher was about to takeover the Bank of Credit & Commerce International and install "Mumsie" as chairman is as hard to credit as the £350,000 the newspaper paid for this collection of recycled cuttings and rumours.

According to the *MoS* "the BCCI plan was devised by Mark and Mrs Thatcher's financial advisers while she was still in office in the late summer of 1990". The deal only fell through, it is claimed, because the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the largest BCCI shareholder, was not prepared to put up £3-£4 million needed for an extensive audit. Sheikh Zayed also rejected a proposed plan for the Royal Bank of Scotland to join forces with BCCI.

If true, such suggestions only show how little Mark Thatcher and his advisers knew about BCCI — unlike Zayed. By the summer of 1990 he already knew that the Bank of Cocaine and Conmen was insolvent. He was preparing to inject up to $4 billion to save the bank and his face. The money was required to disguise the losses and frauds covered up for years by BCCI founder Agha Hasan Abedi, who had initially brought in Zayed. The Gulf ruler did not need to pay for a new audit. He had already received a stream of bad (and badder) news from BCCI auditors Price Waterhouse from April 1990. It seems highly unlikely he would have wanted to pass all this on to his admirer, Mrs Thatcher.

Furthermore the Bank of England — although it did nothing — was also aware BCCI was in deep trouble and was looking for Abu Dhabi to bail out the rogue bank. It is therefore highly unlikely that any approach made to the Bank would have resulted in encouragement for any Thatcher or Royal Bank involvement.

And finally there was the little problem of BCCI's indictment on drug money laundering in Florida. The case against several of its executives reached the US courts in summer 1990. It is hard to see the then prime minister being allowed to get into such a bed of snakes — one which had already ensnared her Labour predecessor Lord Callaghan.

All of which suggests that at best the Mrs T. for BCCI chairman idea was yet another of Mark Thatcher's many pipedreams — or of the authors of *Thatcher's Gold*.

FOR reasons best known as money, stockbrokers Henderson Crosthwaite have taken on as a client the Canadian listed Cycomm International.

Since that became known in November, the Guinness Mahon subsidiary has placed up to 1.5 million shares and warrants in the company which has yet to make a profit and has lost more than £10 million. Cycomm is little known in London but is only too well known in Canada where both the Ontario and British Columbia Securities Commissions initially opposed further share issues. These decisions were later reversed generating much criticism.

In March last year BC investigator Adrian du Plessis quit the commission over its decision to allow Cycomm to issue shares in "a company that has shown a continuing pattern of public misrepresentation". Others on the commission felt similarly.

The BC commission only agreed to the share sale after Cycomm president Philip Garratt — not unknown in London — announced that he was standing down. This was after the commission had raised "a number of concerns relating to trading activities in the company's stock by insiders and other parties during the period 1987 to 1991 and relating to the company's continuous disclosure requirements". Among those whose sharedealings off the back of over-optimistic statements attracted attention were Garratt. In 1993 the Ontario Securities Commission initially refused to allow Cycomm to issue shares there for similar reasons.

Despite Garratt's departure, newspapers in Vancouver continued to find good reasons to blast Cycomm. As a result reporters from the *Vancouver Sun* and *Stockwatch* were banned from the company's annual meeting in November — just before Henderson Crosthwaite came aboard.

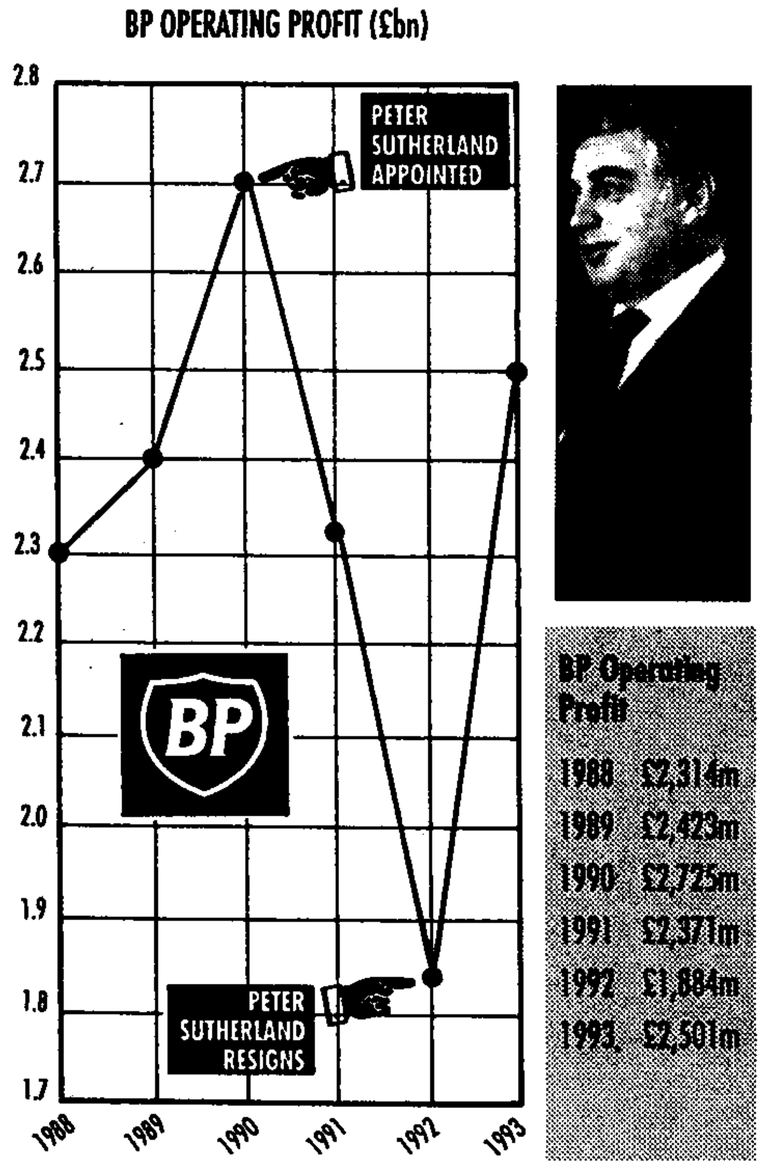
Among the stories Cycomm did not like were those pointing out that while the company lost C$2 million more at C$5.6 million in the nine months to February 1994, directors' pay and perks went up more than C$700,000 to $2.5 million.

Then there was the fact that since 1987 Cycomm had been promising millions in profits from a variety of new products such as an automatic fishing device and a gizmo to wipe the TV ads from videos and now telephone security devices. All so far had turned out flops. Plus there was the revelation that the lawyer in charge of Cycomm's disclosure policies had himself been criticised for non-disclosure by the Canadian Law Society and had smuggled goods into Canada.

Despite such credentials Henderson Crosthwaite agreed to place 1.5 million units in Cycomm at $2 each giving the right to buy more shares at $2.25 to $3. The shares were then around $2.30. They are now down to $1.65. Welcome suckers to investment the Canadian way.

'Slicker'

British Management Part 16.
PETER SUTHERLAND, Director General GATT, EC Commissioner 1985-88. Director British Petroleum 1990-92.



THE DIRECTORS

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QUOTE

Most of the other mourners had to struggle to look forlorn... Younger men had shaved heads and bull necks. One glanced up at a crucified Jesus over the church entrance and observed: "Shot in the chest, eh? Har-har!"

Cal McCrystal, reporting Ronnie Kray's funeral in the Independent

STEPHEN DENNIS Everington, late of St Nicholas, Exeter and Neasden University, enthusiast of the Biscuit Game, contact Rael Imperial, PMM 79, Wakil Pos Mini Morsjaya, Miri 98000, Sarawak asap.

TOPS — Happy Birthday whenever it was. S/Trek goodies upon return, regards to all, JONNY.

SPEECH WRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 41, trapped in lifeless marriage seeks n/s educated gentleman for discreet relationship. Photo please. West Country. Box 2170.

MIDLIFE WOMAN seeks midlife man to make an adventure out of a crisis. No insurance salesmen please! Box 2270.

BEAUTIFUL LADY, 30, wishes to meet interesting, intelligent and successful man for discreet, uncomplicated exchange. London/Oxford. Box 2370.

ENTREPENEUR, handsome, wealthy, married but bored, forty just! Seeks lady for sensual encounters, romance and fun. Daytime number and photo if possible. Absolute discretion assured. Box 2470.

DIVINE, SPORTY female sought, for love and worship by sensitive, caring, 1960 vintage single London male. Box 2570.

SUCCESSFUL, professional boy, 36, seeks stocking-wearing girl 25-45 for friendship, fun and frolics. Being totally honest, I'm short and bald but also intelligent, lively and with a great sense of humour. Interests are arty, foody and a bit sporty. London area. Box 2670.

BIGGLES IS 30! Graduate glider guy seeks woman with big boobs and brains for circuits and bumps. Scramble! Box 2770.

MARRIED MAN, professional forties but lively, seeks discreet caring fun relationship with single/married lady. London/Home Counties. Box 2870.

DARE TO SHARE LIFE with lovely lady lunatic — born to party, travel, sporty, forties, no dependents. Photo required. West Yorks. Box 2970.

LONDON-BASED middle-aged man seeks discreet affair with lady 35-50 years, curvaceous with SOH. Photo appreciated. Box 3070.

GQ-READING Take That!/Ryan Giggs type sought by beautiful brunette pushing 30. Photo ensures reply. Cardiff/Wales. Box 3170.

HOT BABE or near equivalent sought by totally undeserving dreamer, 30. West Midlands. Box 3270.

FARMWORKER 31, non-smoker, North-East, seeks woman. Box 3370.

ACADEMIC, FIT 50, boringly tied, seeks discreet dalliance with likeminded female, Manchester area. Box 3470.

IF YOU ARE a youngish, beautiful and interesting woman don't let my 48 years discourage you from getting involved with this reasonably preserved male specimen, exhibiting a fair degree of wit, grace and engineering skill, presently unattached in the N. West. Box 3570.

WEST YORKSHIRE MALE, 35, writer, spending too much time alone talking to himself, needs brainy, humorous woman to find her way to his farmhouse. Box 3670.

ARTISTIC MAN, 45 years, seeks desirable lady. Box 1265.

ATHLETIC, CREATIVE, passionate, generous, loyal, humorous hunk, seeks buxom, broad-minded, unattached lady to spoil and pamper for mutual bodywork. Photo please. Box 2669.

MARRIED MEDIA MOGUL seeks voluptuous woman for discreet dalliance. Box 1270.

GSOH? HATE XMAS? Like dogs? Able to laugh in bed? Lady 33 seeks intelligent reprobate with hermit tendencies. Box 1370.

SIX FOOT MALE, 27, well-educated, attractive, well-built, solvent, seeks attractive woman with good figure for discreet affair. London. (Photo appreciated). Box 1470.

PINK'S SHIRT hunts Hermès scarf. Well-packaged and intelligent man, 32, seeks elegant modern woman for aesthetic passion. Box 1570.

LOTTERY WINNER, professional, married, seeks springtime gamble with sympathetic lady, preferably married. Box 1670.

ATTRACTIVE international businessman seeks good-looking fun-loving female (20-35) for travelling, romantic afternoons, fun and intimate relationship. Discretion assured. Please reply with photo and phone number to Box 3469.

LAZY LOVABLE SLOB needs some tender loving care. Ladies, where are you? Box 4769.

TITIAN-HAIRED sensual bright beauty, 30s, seeks caring handsome GSOH guy 35/45 for TLC. Photo please. ALA. Box 4869.

PRIVATE EYE SMALLS – CLASSIFIED LINEAGE ADVERTISEMENTS
6 CARLISLE STREET, LONDON W1V 5RG

£1.50 PER WORD
£3.20 PER WORD CENTRED

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Send your advertisement to arrive at least 10 days before publication date with cheque/postal orders or ACCESS, VISA, SWITCH number. Do not send cash.

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EXPIRY DATE: **ISSUE NUMBER (SWITCH):**

CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE:

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DASHING BLADES — Would-be future Chiefs of the Defence Staff require cheap (non essential), Spanish (non essential), tarts (essential) for front page coverage and interesting resignation letters. Photo/s please. Box 3770.

CHEAP TROLLOP with expensive tastes seeks 30-something hunk. ONO. Box 3870.

MEDITERRANEAN MAN, 40s, seeks sunny lady. Yorkshire. Box 3970.

TALL SLIM MALE, 27, thinks he might be just what you are looking for. Box 4070.

MALE, QUIET, TALL, thoughtful, honest, n/s, loves mountains, outdoors, 32, N.East seeks female for friendship. Box 4170.

DOCTOR 33, amiable, attractiveish, adventurous, 6' and fit, seeks lively, loquacious, long-nailed (!) philanthropic female. Bristol/anywhere. Box 4270.

NICE LOOKING, cultured, slim, country gentleman, 41, seeks younger female companion for pleasurable discreet interludes. Flexible menu and venue. Box 4370.

DISCREET DALLIANCE with very attractive, slim, thirties, lady sought by successful, fit gent (41), living in country but also at home in the city. Box 4470.

UNUSUAL CAPTIVATING woman in need of intense and honest man. Must be humorous, subtle and in need of pleasure and sensuality — serious response considered. Box 4670.

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. Buxom woman sought by man, 47, to enjoy life's pleasures together. Don't disappoint me please! London and the South. Box 4770.

AGEING HIPPY, still cruisin', seeks younger mamma for the horizons ahead. All photos returned with your good vibes. Box 4970.

RESIGNEDLY ATTACHED professional (45), successful, caring, gentle, affectionate, likes love, laughter, food, travel, seeks similar younger woman for friendship, maybe more. Box 5170.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM fair-haired woman, 40s, seeks occasional theatre, cinema, outings with loving man (London). Box 4969.

RUPERT BROOKE lookalike, graduate, 28, seeks romantic friendship with pretty, sensitive Sloane Ranger, 23-33. Photo appreciated. London. Box 5069.

SPORTING WOMAN, 30s (neg.) sought by S.London-based man (41). I'm tall, slim, fit and intellectual, with blue eyes, brown hair and a lovely smile. Into films, books, music, cycling and travel. Lycra essential, stockings desirable, status immaterial. Might suit cerebral aerobics teacher. And we met in Sainsbury's, didn't we? Box 5169.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN 41, Midlands, attached, mostly reasonable, seeks discreet relationship with wonderful man. Photo guarantees reply. Box 5269.

LONDON MALES (20S) seek babes. Photo. Box 5369.

SHY GRADUATE 21 seeks older woman for interesting correspondence/friendship. Box 5469.

CURVACEOUS, vivacious, witty, tall, gorgeous n/s single mum 29 seeks similar man without the curves (Kent). Box 5569.

SPORTY INTELLIGENT slim, attractive, professional, cultured woman 39. Cheshire. Widely travelled, many friends. Seeks man with own mind. Box 5669.

ATTRACTIVE professional male, 40, with ties, seeks female for occasional liaisons. Based N/West, often in London. Discretion assured. Box 5370.

MALE 34, journalist, tall, good-looking, interested in books, opera, wine, walks, seeks attractive, larger Rubenesque female. Photo please. London-based. Box 5470.

PROFESSIONAL MAN 32, single, sensitive and successful, likes to live, laugh and love, seeks similar lady. South West. Box 5670.

TALL MAN, 42, seeks lady for mutual happiness. Photo appreciated. ALA. Box 4870.

BOX NUMBER INFORMATION

Private Eye Smalls, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG

IF YOU REQUIRE A BOX NUMBER

Our box numbers are for personal advertisers only (not commercial) — the cost is £8.00.

HOW THEY WORK

Replies are sent to Private Eye and are strictly confidential. We mail them to you initially about 2 weeks after your advertisement has appeared and then (approx) fortnightly for a total of 8 weeks.

REPLYING TO BOX NUMBERS

Only one reply — Send your reply in a stamped addressed envelope to Private EyeSmalls (address above) and mark the box number clearly on the front of the envelope.

More than one reply — Put each reply in an unstamped envelope, seal it and mark the relevant box number clearly on the front of each envelope. Then put them all in a larger stamped envelope addressed to Private Eye Smalls (address above).

Your reply is then forwarded by us to the advertiser.

TALENTED, CHARISMATIC, WARM, witty, intelligent woman, 33. Seeks charming male counterpart, for close friendship, banter, dining out and adventures. Ring 0660 204448

WANTED: Woman - different, unusual, slim(ish), trendy(ish), attractive, intelligent, gsoh, 20-35, into music, clubs, ideas, politics, nature, walking; by attractive man, 32, 5ft 7in, for laughs? love? Ring 0660 204135

VERY ATTRACTIVE, warm woman writer, spontaneous, stylish, independent, seeks tallish, good looking, compassionate, intellectual man, 38-48, for Bach and beaches, Marquez and mountains, laughter and love. Ring 0660 204495

EUROPEAN LADY, 45, caring, challenging, creative, seeks no nonsense man of quality, for relationship, hopefully marriage. Ring 0660 204424

ADVENTUROUS boy-at-heart (40ish athletic graduate professional type). Seeks lissom female (25-35) for stimulating amusing conversation/activities. Ring 0660 204697

ANGLO-FRENCH MALE, ex-banker, young 42, married, loving, needs to reclaim personal space. Values individualism, intelligence, self-awareness. Looking for unconventional, independent lady. Absolutely no discretion required. Ring 0660 204589

BETWEEN 36-49, and feeling there is that special someone out there? Very attractive, warm, easygoing woman, seeks man, special to her. Ring 0660 204492

SPRING SEDUCTION

Opening Lines advertisements now cost just £20 for 20 words - and remember, you have up to four minutes to talk about yourself after that - at only 39/49 p per minute - see how many words you can fit into that!

Call 0181 466 4048 now to place your own Opening Lines advertisement

THE SEARCH FOR A WOMAN might just be over. If you would like to listen to a selection of past, present and even future Opening Lines female advertisers, then why not try our Library Line Service. Just ring this number. Ring 0660 204333

WARM, SOCIABLE, SPORTY and 30ish, with gsoh, fun loving girl who enjoys travel, the arts and good company, seeks n/s, professional male, like you. Ring 0660 204443

ATTRACTIVE tall city professional, 32, too honest for this world, seeks similar bright lady with the same problem, for romance. Ring 0660 204858

YOUNG, GIFTED AND DAFT exiled Northern Media workaholic, seeks slim, funny girl for unpredictable hedonism and walks. Ring 0660 204234

MAN SEEKS WOMAN. Ring 0660 204802

INTELLIGENT WOMAN, n/s, described as 'feisty' or 'stroppy' seeks taller man, friend/lover for arguments, companionable silent, mutual enjoyment. Ring 0660 204992

DOCUMENTARY MAKER, sports cameraman, gsoh, attractive, fit, single, 40s, 5ft 10in, linguist, tennis player, seeks attractive, affectionate, adventurous, slim, n/s female under 36, for friendship/romance. Ring 0660 204173

BRIGHT, WARM, ATTRACTIVE, funny, spontaneous, sensuous, outgoing, woman, 38, loves to laugh, seeks, sincere, caring, witty man, to put that final spark into her life. Ring 0660 204481

CEREBRAL, Chardonnay consuming, challenging, creative, competent, charismatic, chuckling companion (male), required by woman, 37, and looking but not desperate. Ring 0660 204476

BEAUTY WITH BRAINS! American woman, 33, wants to meet dashing gent, for daring, discreet dates. Grey hair a plus. Ring 0660 204913

VIVACIOUS BLONDE, slim, mid 30s, fun loving, romantic, caring, seeks man for fun, friendship and a future. Ring 0660 204268

MEN, ARE YOURS BIG enough? An extremely independent, self sufficient, eclectic, mischievous and artistic female, 35, seeks a man who can measure up. Ring 0660 204461

LOOKING FOR A MAN? then why not try our new Library Line service. To listen to a selection of past, present and even future male Opening Lines advertisers, just dial this number. Ring 0660 204222

COMPANY CHIEF, Kensington based, charismatic, 53, but youthful! gsoh, tied. Seeks beautiful, intelligent, well educated, much younger female companion, for discreet lunches and laughter, maybe more. Ring 0660 204244

FUNNY, EXCITING, DANGEROUS, creative, kind, successful, bearded, n/s, internationally reputed Groucho Club species writer, 40s. Seeks cultured, sensual, witty, slim girlfriend, under 36, over 5ft 7in. Ring 0660 204198

LIBRARY LINES

If you can't find the advertiser of your dreams here - try our Library Lines service.

To hear women - dial 0660 204333

To hear men - dial 0660 204222

HEAVENS ABOVE, are there any bright, witty, independent women who are still single? Creative, musical man, 26, 6ft, desires splendid girlfriend. Call for detailed waffle. Ring 0660 204133

HENRY HIGGINS, 26-35, required by Liza Dolittle, to teach her how to dance all night. Ring 0660 204442

BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT, intelligent maiden, 20s. Slim, exuberant and creative, seeks sharp minded, ambitious and well bred, gallant knight to romance with. Under 36 essential! Ring 0660 204436

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Opening Lines is an independent telephone dating service.

If you like one of the advertisements, simply dial the number advertised - if you are still interested, leave a message with your telephone number. They could call you back within hours!

To take out your own Opening Lines advertisement simply dial 0181 466 4048, 24 hours a day, and dictate the advert.

Calls to the 0660 numbers cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times

Paravox Ltd, PO Box 230, Walton on Thames,KT12 1YX

FREE
Test to find your Perfect Partner

If you want to meet the partner of your dreams why not take part in our new campaign. Whether you are young or old you could find the person you have been looking for amongst many thousands of our members throughout the country, all seeking their special partner.

A friend who is always there for you! Someone who understands you. A partner who loves you and accepts you as you are.

Here's Your Chance!

Simply complete this questionnaire and send it to us today! Or call us on

0171 938 1011

You will receive in the strictest confidence, entirely free of charge and with no obligation:

1. The name and brief description of someone who could be your perfect partner.
2. Our colour brochure with lots of information about seeking a partner and meeting people.
3. A copy of our paperback *"All You Need Is Love"* (R.R.P. £3.99)

Take Part Today!

Complete this questionnaire and return it to us today, or better still, call us now. You will receive by return, entirely free of charge and without obligation, a description of someone who could be your ideal partner. Take a step towards happiness. Try it! It's worth it - you'll see!

PLEASE ENCLOSE 3 FIRST CLASS STAMPS

Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No._____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Religion:_____

Age:_____

Place of Birth:_____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes ❒ No ❒

If yes, how many live with you?_____

3. Your personal details

Height:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Hair colour:_____

Dress/Looks: casual ❒ fashionable ❒ elegant ❒ sporty ❒

4. Your work

Present job:_____

Self-employed ❒ employed ❒

civil servant ❒ manual worker ❒

part-time ❒ not working ❒

unemployed ❒ in-training ❒

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒

Further Education ❒ Polytechnic ❒

University ❒ Business School ❒

Other:_____

5. Your Personality

❒ Warmhearted ❒ Fashionable

❒ Serious ❒ Practical

❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional

❒ Shy ❒ Reliable

❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

❒ always ready for a joke

❒ somewhat dreamy

❒ never has problems

❒ takes life a bit too seriously

❒ not easily upset

❒ always active

❒ chatty

7. Your interests

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music

❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music

❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts

❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV

❒ Reading ❒ Smoking

❒ Travelling ❒ Drinking

❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children

❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking

❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening

❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside

8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:___ Maximum age: _____

Height: min._____ max.____ Don't mind ❒

Children?

Yes, at home ❒ Yes, living elsewhere ❒

None ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Don't mind ❒

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

Dept. PE 40

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL *or call us now on 0171 938 1011*

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